Hafa Adai!

Disturbance forms just south of the Marianas. PAGE 4

PSS resumes in-person classes based on screening/testing schedule. PAGE 4

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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 236

www.saipantribune.com | MONDAY NOVEMBER 29, 2021 | www.facebook.com/saipantribune

88 cases in two days

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A total of 88 cases were reported over a two-day span last week, just 10 cases shy of the 98 positive cases—the highest number ever recorded in the CNMI since the pandemic started—that was reported last Nov. 24. The CNMI's total number of COVID-19 cases now stand at 692. Majority of the newest cases are community transmissions.

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. reported 45 new

See 88 on Page 4

World on alert as COVID variant spreads

By PAN PYLAS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON (AP)—The new potentially more contagious omicron variant of the coronavirus popped up in more European countries on Saturday, just days after being identified in South Africa, leaving governments around the world scrambling to stop the spread.

The U.K. on Saturday tightened its rules on mask-wearing and on testing of international arrivals after

See WORLD on Page 4

IPI request to stop Nov. 30 auction denied

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has ruled in favor of USA Fanter Corp. Ltd., denying Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's recent motion to stay the first auction of IPI assets tomorrow, Nov. 30.

Following a hearing on IPI's verbal motion to vacate or, in the alternative, to stay the limited receivership that was officially filed with the federal court last week, District Court for the NMI Chief Judge

See AUCTION on Page 4

The unfinished casino of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC in Garapan. Photo taken by commercial drone pilot BJ Eddy (https://youtu.be/mydiGis7xwY).

BJ EDDY

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:33pm, Nov. 28, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: 85.6%

Days since last community transmission: 3

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	33,786
Fully Vaccinated:	30,510
Moderna	
Initiated:	4,957
Fully Vaccinated:	4,770
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	984

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	19,146	17*	19,163
Recovered	17,160	3	17,163
Active	1,720	17	1,737
Deaths	263	0	263
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			166,122

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	604	88	692
Traced via Travel Screening	266	1	267
Traced via Community Screening	338	87	425
Deaths	3	0	3

*11/28=5; 11/27=3; 11/26=9

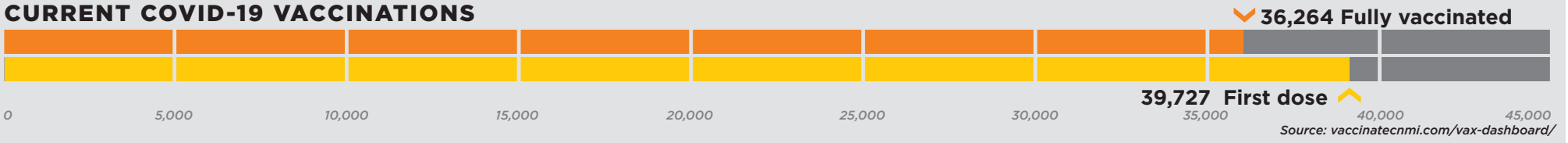
Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

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The last holiday season was far from the most wonderful time for the U.S. Postal Service.

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A new coronavirus variant in southern Africa is leading to a new round of travel restrictions.

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LIFE & STYLE
Stephen Sondheim, the songwriter who reshaped the American musical theater, has died.

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GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

NMHC launches affordable rental housing development programs

As a result of the damage sustained in the 2018 storms—Typhoon Mangkhut and Super Typhoon Yutu—the CNMI received an allocation of Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds, which is administered by the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. In order to address both the direct and indirect impacts of the two storms, the Commonwealth has developed the Rental Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and New Construction Program to cover the eligible costs for repair or replacement of storm-related damage to individual site rental properties as well as to increase the stock of rental units with new construction or acquisition of individual units. Available rental units prior to the disaster were quickly rented, thus creating an even bigger shortage of available and affordable, safe, decent rental units.

On May 28, 2021 and July 28, 2021, the NMHC board of directors adopted the Rental Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and New Construction Program Policies and Procedures—under the CDBG-DR Affordable Rental Housing Development Program. The three CDBG-DR Affordable Rental Housing Development Programs being made available to the public include:

■ **1 to 4 Units Program** – This program will provide a combination of interest-free loan (75% of total cost) and forgivable loan (25% of total cost) to rental property owners with one to four units. The forgivable loan portion is forgiven after completing the affordability period that is contingent on the type of construction project. The remaining interest-free loan balance for both rehabilitation/reconstruction and new construction/acquisition will also be forgiven but after completing 15 years of payments. Tenants must be Low-to-Moderate Income individuals/families.

■ **5 Plus Units (Non-LIHTC) Program** - The program proposes to address the current housing rental shortage through the rehabilitation and development of affordable rental housing, including acquisition, demolition, rehabilitation and new construction, as it pertains to the development of subsidized and affordable units for Low-to-Moderate Income individuals/families.

■ **GAP Filler to LIHTC Program** - The program objective is to leverage LIHTC, or Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, to extend the impact of CDBG-DR funding with the aim of increasing the inventory stock of affordable multifamily rental units. NMHC intends to optimize the use of CBDG-DR funds by providing gap funding and if needed, interim and permanent loans, to leverage available LIHTCs to create/rehabilitate affordable rental housing. All developments funded through this program will benefit low-and moderate-income populations.

For more information, visit cnmi-cdbgdr.com or contact the NMHC CDBG-DR Division at 233-9447/9448/9449/9450 or via email cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhcgov.net. Applications may be picked up at the CDBG-DR office in San Jose, Saipan, the Tinian Field Office (NMC Campus), and the Rota Field Office, Songsong, Rota from 8am to 4pm. ***(PR)***

Cultural leaders in Micronesia to come together in UOG conference

Cultural leaders from the Micronesian region will come together in a public forum this week to share the most pressing issues and challenges on their islands as well as the traditional wisdom that continues to guide their communities. The forum is the 4th Biennial Western Pacific Conference on Public Administration and Policy Solutions being hosted by the Master of Public Administration candidates at the University of Guam in collaboration with the UOG Regional Center for Public Policy.

The conference is open to the public and will be held from 9am to 3:30pmon Wednesday, Dec. 1, on Zoom. Under the theme "Discover – Traditional Perspectives," it will feature presentations by traditional leaders from Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshalls Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands, with each presentation followed by a moderated discussion.

"This conference will bring our honorable traditional leaders into one virtual platform," said MPA candidate Adam Suharto, chairperson of the conference. "It will be a unique opportunity to honor traditional wisdom and be enlightened through their perspectives as we innovate and find ways to better serve our communities."

The graduate students hope the dialog can inform future collaborative projects between the islands and the MPA program, Suharto said.

The MPA program has hosted the Western Pacific Conference every two years since 2015, focusing on the topics of public policy and solutions, improving services for local veterans, decolonization and self-determination, and this year, traditional perspectives.

The conference also looks to further the University of Guam's Platinum Jubilee theme of "Transforming Lives, Advancing Communities" and the university's strategic initiative to build and strengthen regional partnerships.

Partners in the conference include the UOG Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center Network, the UOG Center for Island Sustainability, the Guam Green Growth initiative, Guam EPSCoR-GECCO, Guampedia, and the Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office in Guam.

Register to attend

To attend the 4th Biennial Western Pacific Conference on Public Administration and Policy Solutions, register at https://url.uog.edu/WPC2021.

For more information, contact Suharto at (671) 487-2527 or traditionalperspectives@gmail.com, or visit the conference website at www.discovertraditionalperspectives.com. ***(PR)***

Public warned of choppy seas

The public is being warned that sea conditions will be hazardous to small craft up until 6pm Tuesday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam, a small craft advisory remains in effect through Tuesday afternoon. Seas 9 to 12 feet will be present in Marianas coastal waters. The strongest winds are expected on Monday with choppy seas peaking around 12 feet.

Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid navigating in hazardous conditions. ***(PR)***

Torres sees 2022 the start of building many infra projects

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

People in the CNMI will see the start of many federally-funded construction projects this coming 2022, according to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres last week.

Speaking at a press briefing, Torres said the administration focused so much on the efforts against COVID-19 pandemic in the last two years, so getting nearly everyone vaccinated will now allow them to pivot to other projects.

Torres

The governor said the COVID-19 Task Force, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., CHCC staff, and the CNMI's first responders are really exhausted from its activities tied to the pandemic itself.

"So I hope that we can close that soon by getting our people vaccinated," he said.

Torres underscored the need to have all the population be vaccinated so the government can focus its efforts on other things.

He said they want to focus on the Pacific Mini Games, rebuilding the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, building the cultural facility, and more road projects. The governor said they want to finish the ongoing Route 36 road improvement project and Beach Road improvement project.

Torres said one of the big ongoing road projects that he is excited about is the Bird Island-Kingfisher Golf Links connection.

He said they can also hopefully start building a new campus for Hopwood Junior High School as well as San Antonio school, and other Public School System projects.

Torres said they are maximizing the Infrastructure and Recovery Program and make sure that they can assist with other projects, whether it's Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery, Hazard Mitigation Projects, or Public Assistance Program.

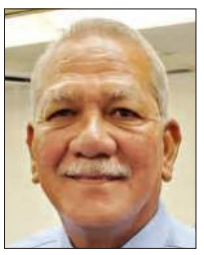
He said IRP has been assisting infrastructure projects on Tinian and Rota as well.

Manibusan finds problematic IPI license fee allocation bill for Rota

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Attorney General Edward Manibusan has found "problematic" a bill that proposes to allocate a portion of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's annual license fee to Rota.

In his legal opinion dated Nov. 23, 2021, Manibusan informed Rota Legislative Delegation co-chair Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota) that House Local Bill 22-23 appears to sidestep the constitutional cap on the legislative budget.


Manibusan

"As I have stated in past comments to the Legislature, it is my opinion that the appropriation to legislative delegations to fund operational costs is an end-run around the constitutional cap on the legislative budget set forth in NMI Constitution Article II, Section 16," he said.

HLB 22-23 proposes to appropriate $535,000 of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's annual license fee to the Rota Legislative Delegation for operations under the joint expenditure authority of the chairperson of the delegation or their designee.

Manibusan said each delegation is a component unit of the Commonwealth Legislature and may not incur expenditures beyond what is established every fiscal year in the annual appropriation acts for the Legislature.

Authored by Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), HLB 22-23 also proposes to allot to Rota from the $1 million exclusive gaming annual license fees the following:

■ $200,000 for interisland medical referral stipend for patients and their escorts under the expenditure authority of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer or his/her designee.

■ $200,000 for Medical Subsistence Allowance for the Rota hemodialysis and terminally-ill patients under the expenditure authority of the Finance Secretary.

■ $15,000 for the Rota Liaison Office under the expenditure authority of the Rota mayor. $7,000 shall be used for vehicle repair and maintenance, $5,000 for fuel and lubrication, and $3,000 for office supplies and equipment.

■ $50,000 shall be used to purchase a vehicle for the De-

See IPI on Next Page

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Disturbance forms just south of the Marianas

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The National Weather Service in Guam reports that a developing circulation just south of the Marianas will bring harsh weather conditions to the CNMI in the next couple of days.

According to NWS meteorologist Brandon Adylett, as of press time, gusts have reached up to 35 mph for Saipan as a result of the developing disturbance.

"We're seeing gusts reaching up to about 30 knots or so. So that's about 35 miles per hour. This is going to be the trend through the night and then we could actually see winds increasing just a little bit early Monday morning, continuing into Monday afternoon. Before shifting around to the southeast, and then slowly decreasing. Monday night and Tuesday," he said.

Adylett said the developing circulation will continue westward to the Philippine Sea, possibly becoming a tropical storm on Tuesday.

Fortunately, the CNMI will not experience the brunt of the tropical depression. However, effects of the developing system will be felt throughout the week.

"This circulation, while it may become a tropical depression tomorrow, or Tuesday, and we're not having any direct effects on the Marianas, we are mainly concerned with the band of heavier showers and thunderstorms that we'll be developing overnight. And then the stronger winds we could be seeing and see developing up to about nine to 12 feet across Marianas. We do currently have a high surf advisory in effect for north and east facing shores of the Marianas, and also a small craft advisory for those hazardous seas and strong winds," he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

WORLD

From Page 1

finding two cases. New cases were confirmed Saturday in Germany and Italy, with Belgium, Israel and Hong Kong also reporting that the variant has been found in travelers.

In the U.S., Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious diseases expert, said he would not be surprised if the omicron variant was already in the United States, too.

"We have not detected it yet, but when you have a virus that is showing this degree of transmissibility ... it almost invariably is ultimately going to go essentially all over," Fauci said on NBC television.

Because of fears that the new variant has the potential to be more resistant to the protection offered by vaccines, there are growing concerns around the world that the pandemic and associated lockdown restrictions will persist for far longer than hoped.

Nearly two years since the start of the pandemic that has claimed more than 5 million lives around the world, countries are on high alert. Many have already imposed travel restrictions on flights from southern Africa as they seek to buy time to assess whether the omicron variant is more transmissible than the current dominant delta variant.

In Britain, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said it was necessary to take "targeted and precautionary measures" after two people tested positive for the new variant in England.

"Right now this is the responsible course of action to slow down the seeding and the spread of this new variant and to maximize our defenses," he told a news conference.

Among the measures announced, Johnson said anyone arriving in England must take a PCR test for COVID-19 on the second day after their arrival and self-isolate until they provide a negative test. And if someone tests positive for the omicron variant, then he said their close contacts will have to self-isolate for 10 days regardless of their vaccination status—currently close contacts are exempt from quarantine rules if they are fully vaccinated.

He also said mask-wearing in shops and on public transport will be required and said the independent group of scientists that advises the British government on the rollout of coronavirus vaccines has been asked to accelerate the vaccination program. This could involve widening the booster program to younger age groups, reducing the time period between a second dose and a booster and allowing older children to get a second dose.

"From today we're going to boost the booster campaign," he said.

Britain's Department of Health said the two cases found in the U.K. were linked and involved travel from southern Africa. One of the two new cases was in the southeastern English town of Brentwood, while the other was in the central city of Nottingham. The two confirmed cases are self-isolating with their households while contact tracing and targeted testing takes place.

The British government also added four more countries—Angola, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia—onto the country's travel red list from Sunday. Six others—Botswana, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe—were added Friday. That means anyone permitted to arrive from those destinations will have to quarantine.

Many countries have slapped restrictions on various southern African countries over the past couple of days, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, the European Union, Iran, Japan, New Zealand, Thailand and the United States, in response to warnings over the transmissibility of the new variant. This goes against the advice of the World Health Organization, which has warned against any overreaction before the variant was thoroughly studied.

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From Page 1

positive cases of COVID-19 last Thursday, followed by 43 new cases last Friday.

CHCC also reported that, as of Nov. 26, there are 290 active cases and three unvaccinated individuals who are hospitalized as a result of COVID-19.

Since Oct. 28, there have been 401 cases. Of the 401, 173 were identified through contact tracing, 216 through community-based testing, and 12 through travel testing.

In its news releases on Nov. 25 and 26, CHCC said the affected individuals have since been isolated and are being actively monitored.

CHCC reported 45 cases on Nov. 25. Of the 45, 34 were identified and confirmed positive through community-based testing, 10 through contact tracing, and one through travel testing.

By vaccination status, of the 45, 34 were fully vaccinated, six unvaccinated, one partially vaccinated, two ineligible to receive COVID-19 vaccines, and two individuals were pending confirmation of their vaccination status as of Nov. 25.

For testing efforts, CHCC said last Thursday that 1,079 COVID-19 tests were conducted on Nov. 24 comprising surveillance and travel testing.

CHCC reported 43 cases on Nov. 26. The cases were identified and confirmed positive through surveillance testing on Nov. 25. Of the 43, 24 were identified through community-based testing and 19 through contact tracing.

By vaccination status, of the 43, 33 were fully vaccinated, seven unvaccinated, one partially vaccinated, and two ineligible.

For testing efforts, CHCC said last Friday that 669 tests were conducted on Nov. 25 comprising surveillance and travel testing.

CHCC reiterated in both news releases that unvaccinated individuals remain at the highest risk of serious illness from COVID-19, and "spread the virus at a higher rate than vaccinated individuals, thereby increasing the spread and risk of serious illness toward other unvaccinated individuals."

As such, vaccines are the best protection against COVID-19, said CHCC, and are readily available at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center vaccination site, Monday to Saturday, 8am to 4pm. Registration can be completed at vaccinatecnmi.com.

CHCC said that its Communicable Disease Investigation/ Inspection team has already reached out to those who were in closest contact with the new cases, and added that "this effort will continue until all probable cases are identified and tested."

If you have concerns regarding possible exposure to a case, CHCC asks you to call its contact tracers no later than 9pm at 670-285-1942, 670-286-1710, or 670-286-1729.

If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, which include fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, and new loss of taste or smell, CHCC asks you to see your health care provider or call the CHCC Tele-Triage hotline at 670-233-2067.

PSS resumption of in-person classes based on screening/testing schedule

By JOSHUA SANTOS
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REPORTER

Acknowledging that some may still have concerns with returning to in-person classes today, Nov. 29, the recent rise in community cases of COVID-19, and PSS leaders' commitment to providing the safest-possible learning environments, the CNMI Public School System announced yesterday its updated plans: schools will now be reopening based on their screening/ testing schedule, and schools that are not scheduled for Nov. 29 will continue with remote online learning until their scheduled date.

The announcement can be found on PSS' Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/cnmipss/.

In a Nov. 28 announcement to PSS' stakeholders, acting Education commissioner Eric M. Magofna wrote that, as eager as he and PSS leadership is to get students back in classrooms, "we know that there is still some apprehension about returning to classes face-to-face" and that "we are fully aware that [COVID-19] is here and information changes daily." As such, the updated reopening plans are as follows:

Schools with screening/ testing scheduled for today and reopening are San Vicente Elementary School, Marianas High School, and Dr. Rita H. Inos Jr./ Sr. High School in Rota.

Schools/ cohorts scheduled for Nov. 30 are Saipan Southern High School's Cohort 1, Da'Ok Academy, Kagman High School's Cohort 1, Dandan Middle School's Cohort 1, Tinian Elementary School, and Sinapalo Elementary School in Rota.

Reopening on Dec. 1 is KHS Cohort 2, William S. Reyes Elementary School, DMS Cohort 2, SSHS Cohort 2, and Tinian Jr./Sr. High School.

Reopening Dec. 2 is Garapan Elementary School and Oleai Elementary School.

Reopening Dec. 3 is Tanapag Middle School Cohort 2, Francisco M. Sablan Middle School Cohort 2, and GTC Elementary School.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

AUCTION

From Page 1

Ramona V. Manglona denied the requests to either vacate or stay the limited receivership, without prejudice. This means IPI can file the motion again.

In a separate statement from USA Fanter lawyer Colin Thompson, as of last Friday, the auction of IPI's gaming equipment is still set for Nov. 30 unless IPI gets a court order. The parties will be back in court at 4:30pm this afternoon for a hearing on pending renewed motion.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, this Tuesday's auction will be the first of six auctions to sell off gaming equipment owned by the Saipan casino operator as receivers look to redeem more than $2 million owed under a U.S. District Court order.

Clear Management Ltd, a company headed by Silver Heritage Group co-founder Tim Shepherd, was appointed as receiver in October after IPI was ordered to repay $2.1 million to USA Fanter for construction work at IPI's Saipan hotel and casino, Imperial Palace Saipan, in 2019. Legal action was launched in January 2020 after IPI failed to pay.

A total of six auctions will be held—one per month until April 29, 2022—with Clear Management now taking blind bids for the Nov. 30 event.

Around the same time Shepherd was appointed receiver in this case, the court denied Thompson's motion for the appointment of a receiver for the sale of IPI's real property.

Manglona denied Thompson's motion without prejudice for the court to appoint a receiver for the sale of IPI's real property but did grant the motion for the limited appointment of a receiver for the sale of IPI's liquid assets, including cash, its gaming machines, vehicles, liquors, and more.

IPI's liquid assets is currently valued at around $2.25 million. However, the parties involve argue that the value of these assets only continue to diminish by the day and may not be enough to satisfy the $2.1-million judgment and its over 15 other creditors.

USA Fanter sued IPI for its failure to pay the full amount due under a construction contract for labor and materials provided for the improvement of IPI's real property.

USA Fanter claims that IPI only paid USA Fanter $300,000 and the unpaid balance due was not less than $2,089,345.28.

IPI

From Page 3

partment of Public Safety-Rota Criminal Investigation Division and for the cost of freight under the expenditure authority of the Rota mayor.

Last October, Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres notified the Senate and the House of Representatives that $8 million in casino license fees that IPI paid to the CNMI government two years ago is available for appropriation.

The $8 million—which is part of the $15 million sixth-year casino license fee that IPI paid the government—will be divided as follows: $1 million for appropriation to the First Senatorial District or Rota, $1 million to the Second Senatorial District or Tinian and Aguiguan, and $6 million to the Third Senatorial District or Saipan and Northern Islands.

Meanwhile, Manibusan said Senate Local Bill 22-10 (naming of buildings and streets), Senate Local Bill 22-8 (amend the Rota Gaming local law), and Senate Local Bill 22-7 (amend the Rota municipal Scholarship Board local law) do not present any legal issues.

Attention CNMI Government Employees, Retirees and Surviving Spouses

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Open Enrollment ends Friday, December 10.

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- Open Enrollment support is available by phone and in-person

Current Members: If you're satisfied with your current plan and coverage, you DO NOT need to submit an enrollment form.

- **If you want to make a change**, add or delete dependents, you MUST complete an enrollment form

New GHLI-CNMI Members MUST complete an enrollment form and submit to your respective Agency.

- **Open Enrollment Support is available by phone and in-person:** contact Pacifica locally at: **670-234-6267** Monday — Friday, 8 AM-5 PM
- For non-OE related inquiries, contact our Member Service Center 24/7 at: **800-231-7729**

Websites to help you choose a plan:

- Aetna International: **www.AetnaInternational.com/cnmi-ghli**
- CNMI Dept of Finance: **www.dof.gov.mp**
- Pacifica Insurance Underwriters, Inc.: **www.pacificains.com/ghlit**

Deliver your Form and any required documentation:

- Active employees: to your respective Agency or Department of Human Resources
- Retirees and surviving spouses: to Pacifica located in the Joeten Shopping Center, Insatto St., Susupe

Open Enrollment started October 25 and ends Friday December 10.

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Solomon Islands violence recedes but not underlying tension

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—Violence receded Friday in the capital of the Solomon Islands, but the government showed no signs of addressing the underlying grievances that sparked two days of riots, including concerns about the country's increasing links with China.

Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare sought to deflect attention from domestic issues by blaming outside interference for stirring up the protesters, with a thinly veiled reference to Taiwan and the United States.

External pressures were a "very big ... influence. I don't want to name names. We'll leave it there," Sogavare said.

Honiara's Chinatown and its downtown precinct were focuses of rioters, looters and protesters who demanded the resignation of Sogavare, who has been prime minister intermittently since 2000.

Sogavare has been widely criticized by leaders of the country's most populous island of Malaita for a 2019 decision to drop diplomatic ties with Taiwan in favor of mainland China. His government, meanwhile, has been upset over millions in U.S. aid promised directly to Malaita, rather than through the central government.

Those issues are just the latest in decades of rivalry between Malaita and Guadalcanal, where the capital, Honiara, is located, said Jonathan Pryke, director of the Sydney-based Lowy Institute think tank's Pacific Islands program.

"Most of the drivers of the tension have been in the country for many decades and generations, and a lot of it is born out of the abject poverty of the country, the limited economic development opportunities and the inter-ethnic and inter-island rivalry between the two most populous islands," he said.

"So everyone's pointing fingers, but some fingers also need to be pointed at the political leaders of the Solomon Islands."

The Solomon Islands, with a population of about 700,000, are located about 1,500 kilometers (1,000 miles) northeast of Australia. Internationally they are probably still best known for the bloody fighting that took place there during World War II between the United States and Japan.

Riots and looting erupted Wednesday out of a peaceful protest in Honiara, primarily of people from Malaita demonstrating over a number of grievances. Police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at the demonstrators, who set fire to the National Parliament, a police station and many other buildings.

Protesters defied a lockdown declared by Sogavare on Wednesday to take to the streets again on Thursday.

Critics also blamed the unrest on complaints of a lack of government services and accountability, corruption and Chinese businesses giving jobs to foreigners instead of locals.

Since the 2019 shift in allegiance from Taiwan to China there has been an expectation of massive infrastructure investment from Beijing—locally rumored to be in the range of $500 million—but with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic shortly after the shift, none of that has yet materialized.

Malaita threatened to hold a referendum on independence over the issue, but that was quashed by Sogavare's government.

Sogavare said Friday that he stood by his government's decision to embrace Beijing, which he described as the "only issue" in the violence, which was "unfortunately influenced and encouraged by other powers."

"I'm not going to bow down to anyone. We are intact, the government's intact and we're going to defend democracy," he said.

More than broad geopolitical concerns, however, Pryke said the demonstrations really boiled down to frustration over the lack of opportunities for a largely young population, and the concentration of much of the country's wealth in the capital.

"I guarantee you the vast majority of the people involved in the rioting and looting couldn't point China or Taiwan out on a map," he said. "They were there as opportunists because they have had very limited economic opportunity. It's a very poor country with high youth unemployment, and this just shows how quickly these things can spiral out of control in a country that's volatile."

Andrew Yang, a professor at Taiwan's National Sun Yat-sen University and former deputy defense minister, said China's efforts to win diplomatic recognition from the Solomon Islands government are part of a competition for regional dominance.

'CHCC Sunshine Squad' donates $1,000 to HOPE Recovery Center

From left, emergency medicine physician and medical director of public health at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. Dr. Lily Muldoon; internal medicine physician at CHCC Dr. Jenna Kong; special assistant for the Substance Abuse, Addiction, and Rehabilitation (SAAR) program Yvette R. Sablan; and SAAR group home supervisor Itimal Taisakan share a photo on Wednesday after a $1,000 check handoff at CHCC's admin office. The "CHCC Sunshine Squad" is a committee of CHCC medical staff with the goals of making quarterly donations to community organizations and building camaraderie, connection, and collaboration among CHCC staff. JOSHUA SANTOS

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Just in time for last wek's observance of Thanksgiving, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s "Sunshine Squad" presented on Wednesday a $1,000 check to the Hinemlu O'hala Para Enteramenti, or HOPE, Recovery Center.

Present for the donation handoff on Wednesday at CHCC was Yvette R. Sablan, who is special assistant for the Substance Abuse, Addiction, and Rehabilitation program under the CNMI Office of the Governor; SAAR group home supervisor Itimal Taisakan; internal medicine physician Dr. Jenna Kong; and emergency medicine physician and medical director of public health Dr. Lily Muldoon.

In remarks after the handoff, on the behalf of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, the SAAR program, and HOPE participants, Sablan expressed her gratitude to CHCC for making such a "thoughtful and generous donation." With Thursday being Thanksgiving, she said there could not have been better timing to have received the donation.

"We are extremely thankful, and [we] sincerely appreciate this very thoughtful and generous donation. Considering that [this Thursday] is a day of giving thanks, this couldn't come at a better time. ...We can't wait to put this to good use and we're excited to actually share it with the participants," said Sablan.

Sablan added that HOPE participants were unable to join her and Taisakan on Wednesday for COVID-19 safety reasons, but assured they too would have been "very pleased to receive this generous donation."

Muldoon shared that she and Kong serve on the CHCC committee that "helps decide what goes on with medical staff funds" and said that when the opportunity to give back to the HOPE Recovery Center came up, she and the committee took it.

"As an emergency room doctor, I see there every day people who are suffering from substance use disorders. …[I] have referred patients to the Recovery Center and have taken care of patients who have come from the center, [and] it's really remarkable, the services that you're able to provide," said Muldoon.

When asked what the "Sunshine Squad" was, Kong and Muldoon explained that it was the name of a committee of CHCC medical staff with the goals of making quarterly donations to community organizations and building camaraderie, connection, and collaboration among CHCC staff.

Solomon Islands police find 3 bodies after violent protests

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—Solomon Islands police found three bodies in a burned-out building and arrested more than 100 people in this week's violence sparked by concerns about the Pacific nation's increasing links with China.

Australian media reported the bodies were recovered late Friday after riots and protests subsided. No other details were given.

Authorities imposed a curfew in the capital Honiara, after a 36-hour lockdown ordered by the embattled Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare ended Friday.

Sogavare blamed outside interference for stirring up the protests calling for his resignation, with a thinly veiled reference to Taiwan and the United States.

Sogavare has been widely criticized by leaders of the country's most populous island of Malaita for a 2019 decision to drop diplomatic ties with Taiwan in favor of mainland China. Beijing claims the self-ruled island of Taiwan as part of its territory.

His government, meanwhile, has been upset over millions in U.S. aid promised directly to Malaita, rather than through the central government on the largest island of Guadacanal, where Honiara is located. The two islands have been rivals for decades.

Andrew Yang, a professor at Taiwan's National Sun Yat-sen University and former deputy defense minister, said China's efforts to win diplomatic recognition from the Solomon Islands are part of a competition for regional dominance with the United States and its ally, Australia.

The Solomon Islands, with a population of about 700,000, are about 1,500 kilometers (1,000 miles) northeast of Australia. They are best known for the bloody fighting that took place there during World War II between the United States and Japan.

Riots and looting targeting Hoinara's Chinatown and downtown precincts erupted Wednesday out of a peaceful protest in the capital by people from Malaita. Police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at the demonstrators, who set fire to the National Parliament, a police station and many other buildings.

Critics also blamed the unrest on complaints of a lack of government services and accountability, corruption and Chinese businesses giving jobs to foreigners instead of locals.

Since the 2019 shift in allegiance from Taiwan to China, there has been an expectation of massive infrastructure investment from Beijing—locally rumored to be in the range of $500 million—but with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic shortly after the shift, none of that has yet materialized.

Malaita threatened to hold a referendum on independence over the issue, but that was quashed by Sogavare's government.

A plane carrying Australian police and diplomats are in Honiara to help local police restore order. Up to 50 more Australian police and 43 defense force personnel were also deployed following a request by Sogavare under a bilateral treaty with Australia. The presence of an independent force, though small, seemed to help quell some of the violence.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has been following the protests "with concern," his deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said.

"(Guterres) calls for an end to the violence and the protection of hard-won peacebuilding gains. He urges dialogue and ceful means to address differences," Haq said in a statement on Friday.

500 Sails welcomes Marjorie Daria as director of Community Programs

Marjorie A. Daria has been named as the new director of Community Programs with 500 Sails, effective last Nov. 1, 2021.

Born on Saipan and raised on Tinian, Doria is the daughter of Juan Manalo and Lourdes Daria Atalig.

According to a 500 Sails press statement, Doria "brings a renewed energy and enthusiasm to 500 Sails, having served on its board of directors as the chair of the Strategic Planning Committee and later as its vice president. She sailed twice to Tinian over the past year with 500 Sails with renowned Master Navigator Mario Benito and Master Navigator Antonio Piailug, in order to re-introduce maritime sailing activities to her community. She is an active teacher to the current Famalo'an Lalåyak cohort, providing traditional sailing instruction that was developed by Master Navigator Cecilio Raikiulipiy.

Daria

A graduate of Tinian Jr. Sr. High School, Doria has gone on to pursue bachelor degrees in Psychology (research concentration) and Biology and a minor in Neuroscience from the University of Connecticut and a master's degree in Medical Sciences from the University of South Florida.

She is also a graduate of the 2017 Executive Leadership Development Program under the Graduate School USA, U.S. Department of the Interior, networking with a number of like-minded leaders across the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, American Samoa, and Guam.

With a deep passion for her Tinian community, Doria worked for her island with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. as a care coordinator under the System of Care grant under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, where she was instrumental in laying the foundation for the children's mental health program, as well organizing the 2016 Micronesian Youth Summit Network Conference on Tinian.

At just 26, she transitioned as the resident director for the Tinian Health Center, where she oversaw the management of the clinic and its adjacent 24- hour Emergency Unit, and worked at a local level to best represent the wellbeing of the clinic and the health population to shape policy with stakeholders. Making the move to Saipan, just last year in light of the pandemic, Doria worked for CHCC's Environmental Health Disease Prevention Program, leading and training a small team in investigating a number of high-profile infectious disease cases, including COVID-19. Her background provides added value to 500 Sails in improving health outcomes with a culturally tailored approach and that partnerships with her sister islands stay vibrant.

A leader by example, Doria has served a diverse, multi-ethnic population from her time on the executive council with Huskies Away from Home during her undergraduate years, as an AmeriCorps patient advocate in the Emergency Department at Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland, as a summer intern to rural villages in Guatemala and Honduras, and later on the Tinian Women's Association, Inc., where she also helped champion the movement to Save Pagan, Save Tinian alongside her fellow community members. She currently serves on the board for the Inetnun Kutturan Natibun Marianas/Kkoor Anamasal Marianas as their secretary.

"Health and wellness are vital to my core values and it's centered on the connections we have to the place we call home, the community around us, the way we view ourselves, and our past and future," said Doria. "If one of the ways to strengthen our cultural identity is to reclaim our maritime practices and traditions, then we can provide an outlet where we not only strengthen our physical well-being, but our mental health and cultural roots as well. Soon, we can build a healthier CNMI community who practice canoe culture in their daily lives."

"Marjorie is a wonderful fit for 500 Sails, bringing a natural energy to those around her as she's out on the water. She's been on the board this past year and has been instrumental in the development of 500 Sails' five-year strategic plan. We can't think of anyone better to implement that, moving forward" said Emma and Peter Perez, co-founders of 500 Sails.

500 Sails is a 501(c)3 and CNMI tax-exempt nonprofit organization dedicated to reviving, promoting, and preserving the maritime cultural traditions of the Mariana Islands through community engagement in canoe cultural values and activities. 500 Sails' vision is a healthy thriving native community that has successfully integrated traditional cultural values into modern life.

Further information can be found on the 500 Sails website at https://500sails.org and updates on our community programs can be found on our 500 Sails Facebook and Instagram pages. Community Programs Director Daria can be reached via email through mdaria@500sails.org or at the boatyard in Lower Base at (670) 323-7245 (SAIL). ***(PR)***

NOTICE OF INTENT TO FILE WITHDRAWAL AND DISSOLUTION

Please take notice that Bestow Life Insurance Company (f/k/a Centurion Life Insurance Company) intends to file an application for withdrawal of its Certificate of Authority with the Insurance Section of the CNMI Department of Commerce and for a Certificate of Withdrawal from the CNMI Registrar of Corporations anytime after this notice is made.

Anyone with a claim against Bestow Life Insurance Company is requested to submit it in accordance with the following:
1. The claim shall be made in writing and shall state the name of the claimant, the amount of the claim, the factual basis for the claim, and the name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number of the person who may be contacted by the corporation with respect to the claim.
2. The claim may be sent to: legal@bestow.com
3. A claim against Bestow Life Insurance Company will be barred unless a processing to enforce the claim is commenced within five years after the publication of the notice.

BESTOW LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Frankie K. Manalo (Name of Father))
Y.K.K)
J.J.K (Name of Children))
Plaintiffs,)
Vs.)
Marakita Kanistus (Name of Mother))
Defendant)

FCD PA CIVIL ACTION NO. 21-0395

SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the Court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Plaintiff whose address is P.O. Box 503704 CK Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this Summons, Judgement by Default may be taken against you for relief in the Complaint.

Dated this 16th day of September, 2021.

/s/ Clerk of Court

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
DEQ: P.O. Box 501304, DCRM: P.O. Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950-1304
DEQ Tel.: (670) 664-8500/01; Fax: (670) 664-8540
DCRM Tel.: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.deq.gov.mp and www.crm.gov.mp

Ralph DLG. Torres, Governor
Arnold I. Palacios, Lt. Governor
Eli D. Cabrera, Administrator
Zabrina C. Shai, Acting Director, DEQ
Richard V. Salas, Director, DCRM

PUBLIC NOTICE

REQUEST FOR CNMI WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act, activities that may result in a discharge to Waters of the United States and require a federal permit or license also receive Water Quality Certification. In issuing a Water Quality Certification for a federal permit or license, BECQ must assure that the proposed activity complies with all applicable provisions of the CNMI Water Quality Standards, will not interfere with the attainment or maintenance of the existing or designated uses of the Commonwealth waters, and that all appropriate and practicable steps have been taken to minimize potential adverse impacts to aquatic life and human health. Further, the Antidegradation Policy of the Water Quality Standards of the CNMI states that the protection and maintenance of the quality of the waters of the Commonwealth are an historic and legal right of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands, and that this shall be the public policy of the Commonwealth.

Upon receiving a request for certification, BECQ issues a public notification that describes the proposed activity and potential impacts on water quality, aquatic life and human health. A thirty (30) day public comment period will commence from the date of the publication of the notice.

The Administrator of BECQ may conduct a public hearing to solicit comments on the application if a hearing is requested by the public. BECQ will make a determination for issuing a Water Quality Certification based upon a complete technical review of the application and the public comments received.

BECQ is soliciting comments on the following request for a CNMI Water Quality Certification.

1. APPLICANT: National Park Service - American Memorial Park
135 Murray Blvd., Ste 100
Hagatna, GU 96932

2. APPLICABLE STATUTORY AUTHORITY: CNMI Commonwealth Environmental Protection Act (Public Law No. 3-23); CNMI Water Quality Standards, Chapter 65-130

3. LOCATION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY: Smiling Cove Marina and Outercove Marina, Garapan, Saipan

4. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY: The proposed activity at Smiling Cove Marina includes the demolition and removal of a 670-foot linear section of existing concrete mattress revetment and a 25-foot linear section of existing boulder revetment structure. The demolished structures at Smiling Cove Marina would be replaced by a 720-foot linear boulder structure. At Outercove Marina, a new 124-foot linear shoreline stabilization structure will be installed. Both construction projects would require excavation activities below the mean high water line. The project is being reviewed under US Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permits, therefore it requires Water Quality Certification from BECQ in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. US Army Corps of Engineers is currently reviewing the proposed activity under Nationwide Permit Numbers 3, 13, and 16.

5. IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION: The discharge for which a federal permit(s) is required, and therefore Water Quality Certification is required, is associated with dredge and fill of material within waters of the US. Specifically, material will be excavated during the demolition and removal of the existing revetment structures and placed in dewatering systems. Sediment excavated may be reused on site as fill material. Geotextile and rock will be installed on site to serve as the new revetment structures. The proposed project activities have the potential to discharge sediment and exceed CNMI Water Quality Standards for turbidity and Total Suspended Solids.

6. PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES: During construction, the National Park Service (NPS) will be subject to all applicable Best Management Practices and compliance with CNMI Water Quality Standards. NPS has developed a Water Quality Monitoring Plan to ensure that CNMI Water Quality standards will not be violated during construction. As part of the Water Quality Monitoring Plan, NPS and the construction contractor will generate baseline water quality data for turbidity and then assess water quality during construction activities.

Written comments should be submitted to DEQ within thirty (30) days of the date of publication of this notice. Please email comments to cnmi.waterquality@gmail.com.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22 – 027
Opening Date: November 18, 2021
Closing Date: December 2, 2021

POSITION TITLE:	**Trades Assistant: Mechanic**
DEPARTMENT:	**Power Generation**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$16,742.00 - $22,602.00 per annum, Non-Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**Three (3)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Power Generation Manager or his/her designee. The Trades Assistant: Mechanic assists with the safe and efficient operation of all plant equipment and machinery including, but not limited to, incinerators, generators, operation of valves, plant production operations, and unloading of diesel fuel tank trucks to storage tanks.

Duties:
- Follows all safety and operations procedures during operations and maintenance activities.
- Monitoring Plant systems as assigned;
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection.
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used.
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete.
- Monitors equipment.
- Makes readings and collects data.
- Documents equipment readings.
- Prepares and submits data and work reports.
- Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily work activities.
- Assisting with equipment inspections, cleaning, corrosion control, and painting.
- Operating incinerators.
- Oil and water separator pump, servicing and preparing oil filters.
- Maintaining grounds, trimming trees and removing debris and housekeeping.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS. Training and knowledge in operations repair, and maintenance of power generating and/or industrial equipment/facilities desired but not required.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Must be able to lift and carry heavy objects of 45 pounds and over, climb ladders, reach above the shoulders, stand, sit, crawl and kneel for prolonged periods and perform repeated bending. Recognize color codes, operate cranes and motor vehicles. Work inside around machinery in operation; in varying degree of temperature in tight or cramped (confined) work spaces, at heights, on ladders or scaffolds, and on slippery or uneven walking surfaces in close proximity to high and low voltage circuits and climbs stairs frequently. Occasionally use solvents, de-greasing agents, or other chemical agents, and be assigned to protracted or irregular hours of work. Work in environments exposed to dust, oil, grease, constant or excessive noise, vibration, and smoke and gas fumes. Work closely with others and/or alone depending on assigned daily activities.
Must be available to work a 24/7 rotation shift to include weekends and holidays, may be on call for emergency response.
All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXI, Issue No. 236

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Justice for Arbery, at last

Ahmaud Arbery's killing in February 2020 sounded at first like a horrific flashback to an earlier era in which white men killed Black men for appearing in places they were neither expected nor welcome, and then were coddled instead of arrested and prosecuted by the local police. It brought to mind the distant memory of Emmett Till and more recent one of Trayvon Martin.

It seemed a bit more modern when finally, more than two months later, amid mounting public outrage and state pressure, Gregory McMichael, Travis McMichael and William "Roddie" Bryan Jr. were arrested in the killing. The guilty verdicts Wednesday at last bring the case to a present day in which people who engage in such blatant aggression are held to account, though they aren't always.

Arbery was out for a jog when the three men in two trucks chased him, ostensibly because they heard rumors of thefts and break-ins in the neighborhood. The assailants, one of whom was a former police officer, took it upon themselves to go after the person they deemed to be a suspect. They were taking their places in a long and horrid tradition of lynching, vigilantism and so-called citizen policing.

It will be tempting to see the convictions, just like the acquittal last week of Kyle Rittenhouse, as a "win" or a "loss" for one side or the other in the nation's smoldering debate over race, politics and justice. That's a deceptive lens. No jury can carry the weight of such a fight.

If they do their jobs properly, jurors decipher the facts that were presented and render a decision based on the law of the jurisdiction where they serve. The jurors in the Arbery case appear to have done that. Whether the laws need changing, and if so, how, are separate questions.

But there is a victory in this verdict for racial and criminal justice. Georgia, for its part, updated its citizens arrest laws last year in response to the Arbery killing. That's a win, too, for professional law enforcement, who recognize that police do a job that should not be entrusted to just anyone with a gun who harbors suspicions or animus about another person.

That's a counterpoint in the nation's national debate over policing and professional law enforcement's use of the special powers we grant them. Whether those powers should be curbed remains a subject for discussion, but the verdicts at least argue against extending them to all people, including ex-cops like Gregory McMichael.

But for now, at least, there is justice for Arbery, at last.

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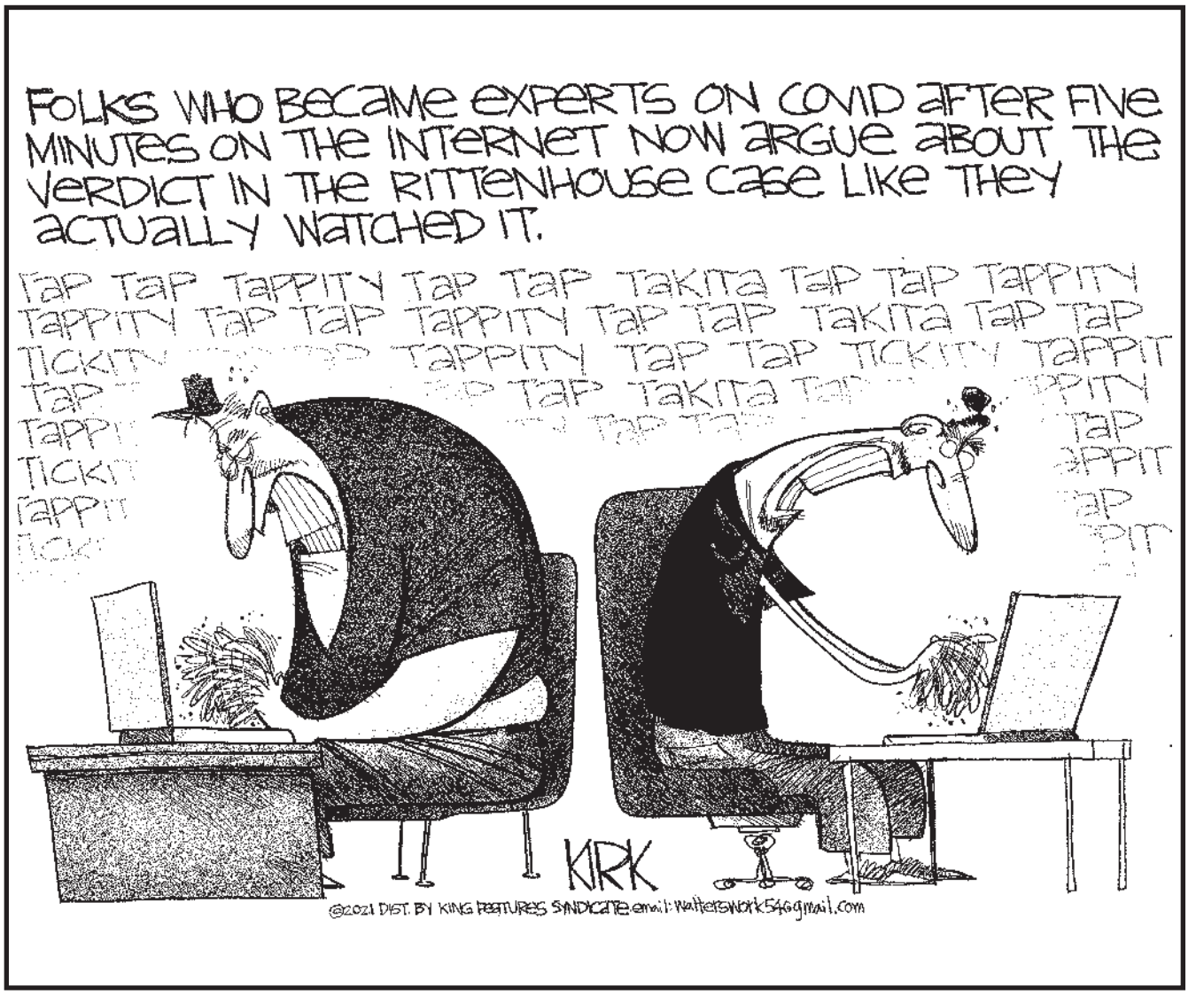
FOLKS WHO BECAME EXPERTS ON COVID AFTER FIVE MINUTES ON THE INTERNET NOW ARGUE ABOUT THE VERDICT IN THE RITTENHOUSE CASE LIKE THEY ACTUALLY WATCHED IT.
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We send back 30% of what we buy online. How our return culture alters the supply chain

By GAD ALLON
Los Angeles Times

Gad Allon is faculty director of the Jerome Fisher Program in Management and Technology at the University of Pennsylvania.

As the world pays new attention to supply chains, much of the focus has been on delays in delivering products to stores and consumers. What is called the forward supply chain, the path from raw material to the customer, is being scrutinized.

But the other side of the supply chain—the process of returning a product—also plays a significant role. Many goods that firms work hard to bring to the U.S. will be sent back soon after they are delivered. Across all e-commerce, about 30% of purchases are returned and about half of all clothing is sent back.

While the forward supply chain enjoys economies of scale at every stage, the reverse supply chain—the complicated act of retrieving a product from a customer—is costly and inefficient.

A 2019 investigation brought transparency to the return process. It was conducted by the Canadian Broadcasting Co.'s watchdog program Marketplace and the Basel Action Network, an environmental advocacy group. They purchased a dozen products from Amazon Canada and returned them, hiding a GPS tracker in each one.

They found many returns took a circuitous route, often covering several hundred miles—sometimes even thousands—before reaching their final destinations. Toy blocks traveled 590 miles before being delivered to a new customer in Quebec, and a printer was hauled 620 miles while circling around southern Ontario.

Of the 12 items returned, only four had been resold when the story was published. The rest were still in transit months after their being returned. At least one, a new backpack, was found in a landfill. For the report, Amazon didn't respond to questions about what percentage of its returns are sent to landfills. Soon after the report aired, Amazon introduced a program in the U.S. and the United Kingdom dedicated to helping sellers send returns directly to charities instead of landfills.

In addition, a journalistic investigation released in 2019 in France also showed that many products, overstocked or returned, have been thrown away by Amazon.

Amazon has plenty of company. A quarter of the online products returned end up being discarded, according to ReturnGo, a firm I advise that tries to help retailers improve their return processes.

Experiencing sudden, frequent, uncontrollable laughing and/or crying episodes? It could be Pseudobulbar Affect (PBA), which can happen as a result of a brain injury or certain neurologic conditions.

Why are firms so wasteful in dealing with returns? One reason has to do with health and safety regulations. For instance, it is considered unsanitary to resell certain items, such as beauty products and swimwear. H&M, for example, will not accept swimwear if the hygienic seal has been opened. But the more prevalent reason is reverse logistics, the side of the supply chain that moves goods from customers back to the sellers or manufacturers.

Less than 10% of products are returned to brick-and-mortar stores. In the early days of e-commerce, people were reluctant to buy clothing and shoes online given concerns about sizing and fit. After Zappos disrupted the shoe and clothing industries by offering long return windows without any restrictions on the conditions of the product, most other retailers were quick to follow—except the lenient policies led customers to change their purchasing behavior.

Products are returned by customers at random times and in small batches. They are shipped to various places based on product type, sorted and stored until a decision is made on whether to resell them. It's a time-consuming process that has little value. Accepting a product and preparing it to be shipped back is viewed as a nuisance, so not much thought has gone into making the process more efficient. Yet most companies still offer generous return policies to keep their customers coming back.

In a recent survey of 1,000 adults, more than 50% of online shoppers said they avoid retailers with strict return policies while nearly 55% reported making online purchases knowing they were likely to return at least some of the items purchased.

See SUPPLY CHAIN on Next Page

Wake up, America! COVID cases are spiking again. Would it kill you to wear a mask?

By WILL BUNCH
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Will Bunch is national columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer.

As the Vietnam War started to look like a hopeless quagmire in 1966, a Vermont senator named George Aiken famously suggested that America could save its troops by simply declaring victory and coming home—regardless of the actual situation on the ground. Aiken passed away in 1984, but his spirit seems to be guiding America's COVID-19 policy as the second anniversary of the pandemic looms.

From coast to coast, in red and blue states, governors and mayors are sometimes giddy in declaring victory over the coronavirus and racing to remove any remaining mask mandates and restrictions on public gatherings, hoping to score points with an American public desperate for a full return to normalcy. The unspoken part of the bargain is hoping you won't look at the tiny box in your daily newspaper or its website—the one showing COVID-19 case counts spiking across America for the fifth time since March 2020.

Last week, a New York Times article on the pros and cons of continued mask mandates stressed that "the summer's delta surge [is] in the rearview mirror"—ignoring the much more salient point that winter's COVID-19 surge is just beginning. The author just had to look at the newspaper's homepage last Wednesday to see that new coronavirus cases in the United States had surged 25% over 14 days, back up to 94,335 in one day.

"We are concerned that changing course in the winter months, not to mention the week before a major travel holiday, is not a prudent course of action," reads a letter from 10 Washington, D.C., city council members who are alarmed that their mayor, Muriel Bowser, is lifting a citywide mask mandate. "It sends a signal that public health concerns are back to normal when they are not."

No, they aren't. In the Midwest, where cold weather typically drives people indoors a couple of weeks earlier than the rest of the United States, and where vaccination rates aren't quite as high as the coastal states, officials have seen a two-week rise in cases of 56% and—much more worrisome—a 20% spike in hospitalizations. And this was before the heavy travel and large get-togethers associated with the Thanksgiving holiday.

Even more alarming is the situation with our developed, Northern Hemisphere peers over in Europe, where several countries—such as Austria and Netherlands—have seen cases rise to a level where government officials have taken the extreme step of new lockdowns. Many exhausted citizens aren't standing for this. In the Dutch city of Rotterdam, for example, young people rebelling against harsh new restrictions rioted for three nights in a row. They set fires and threw rocks at cops, who then fired bullets, wounding four people.

It surely won't come to that in America—only because our political leaders know that lockdowns are a non-starter in a nation where people fight at school board meetings or issue death threats over much more benign measures such as mandatory masks in public schools, where children may have only recently become eligible for a vaccine. So instead, we see these premature victory declarations like in Florida, where state officials praised "Governor Ron DeSantis' leadership and our data-driven approach free of mandates" for a temporary autumn decline in cases after a harsh summer and early fall in which 21,000 people died under the benevolent rule of the Sunshine State's Dear Leader.

Look, America's "Whatever Guy" shrug to the increasing case counts is understandable. Americans are a determined people, and ever since the first big spring drop in case counts that came after this year's arrival of vaccines, the momentum to reopen the economy has been inexorable. Hopefully, with some 200 million citizens having received at least one jab, case counts won't return to the astronomical levels of one year ago—but if they did, there is zero public support for the harsh measures coming back in Europe.

But the nation should also look at the troubling new COVID-19 numbers and ask itself: Would it kill people if they were required to wear a mask in public spaces during the upcoming winter months, when seasonal spread is worst and with many children still not vaccinated? Or, more to the point, will it kill some of us if we don't?

In hindsight, one of the biggest goofs by U.S. public health officials was failing to see the great utility of mask-wearing in the first weeks of the pandemic. Some 20 months later, we know better—or at least medical researchers do. We know know that even the simplest cloth mask blocks more than 50% of infection-bearing aerosols and that more sophisticated masks do even better, with evidence in studies done everywhere from here at home to remote villages in largely unvaccinated Bangladesh.

Some of the best circumstantial evidence that mask-wearing stops infections—even in the current moment of widespread but far from universal vaccination—comes from right here in the Philadelphia area. Throughout the fall, officials in America's sixth-largest city—where vaccination rates have been close to 10 percentage points lower than neighboring suburban counties—kept its indoor mask mandate in place while the rest of the region did not. Since September, Philadelphia has been reporting lower COVID-19 case counts than its adjacent counties. "The only difference I see is the mask mandate," Cheryl Bettigole, the city's health commissioner, told The Inquirer. "It's hard to see what the difference is otherwise."

At the start of the Christmas season, America is at a crossroads. Political leaders can do what's popular, what's most expedient, and what may keep bullying Proud Boy types from showing up at school board meetings: They can continue to lift mask mandates, as employee vaccine mandates take hold. Or they can follow the science—something this country is increasingly terrible at. Buffalo this week reimposed its indoor mask mandate—the city's hospitals are 90% full as cases spike—but I wonder how many will have the courage to follow.

Nobody likes wearing masks. I don't, but other than maybe one week of irrational exuberance in June, I've kept wearing them in stores, even now as I'm triple vaccinated. That's because I don't want to think about the impact of a breakthrough infection on me or the others around me. But honestly, I'm even more worried what another spike—when Americans have convinced themselves the pandemic is all but over—will do for our fragile body politic.

If the nation seemed on the brink of civil war over school masking requirements a couple of months ago, will new restrictions trigger Rotterdam-style disturbances here in the U.S.? The prevailing American mood as 2021 winds down was already deeply sour, so how will it impact the economic recovery and efforts by President Biden and Congress to pass legislation for the middle class if intensive-care units are full, armed anti-maskers are marching on statehouses, and the public is generally more angry and frustrated than it is right now?

Requiring that everyone wear masks in indoor public spaces for a few more months would likely save thousands of lives. That would be one small step for humankind, but it would require one giant leap of faith in science. I'm not holding my breath.

Keep infrastructure in the public's hands

By DONALD COHEN
Progressive Perspectives

Donald Cohen is the executive director of In the Public Interest and the author of The Privatization of Everything. *This column was produced for* The Progressive *magazine and distributed by Tribune News Service.*

The recently passed $1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill will provide desperately needed federal dollars to fix our roads, water systems and other public infrastructure. But the bill is not all sunshine and rainbows.

A provision in the bill incentivizes state and local governments to hand control over some of the new projects to corporations and private investors. And that will create opportunities for bad things to happen.

Much of the new federal spending will go to fill potholes, repair bridges, lower the cost of high-speed internet, and build other things our communities need. But for large, federally supported transportation projects, state and local governments will be required to consider additional funding from private investors.

The danger is that this additional funding comes with strings attached. The private investors negotiate contracts—called "public-private partnerships"—that allow them to profit from raising water rates or hiking tolls on highways, or from charging the government expensive lease payments.

These contracts are not only more expensive than if the state or locality used traditional public financing, but they also often empower private investors to shape public policy.

The city of Chicago, for instance, signed a public-private partnership in 2008 to lease its downtown parking meters to a group of investors including Morgan Stanley and a Middle Eastern sovereign wealth fund. Today, with 62 years to go on the 75-year lease, the investors have already made a 143% return on their investment. That profit could be going to investing in Chicago's public schools or improving public safety, but instead it's leaving the city. Not only that, the city has to pay the investors if they make changes that lower parking revenue, like holding a street fair or adding bike lanes or dedicated bus lanes.

In Maryland, Gov. Larry Hogan is proposing a public-private partnership to build new toll lanes in the suburbs outside of Washington, D.C. To make the project profitable for investors, the toll for a rush-hour, one-way, 12-mile trip could cost $50 or more.

These numbers are jaw-dropping, but not surprising. Private corporations are accountable to their investors and shareholders. They aim to turn a profit, and sometimes that gets in the way of the mission that our public institutions exist to serve.

The private sector is great at producing things like loaves of bread and laptop computers. But when it comes to public goods like infrastructure—roads, water systems and bridges—a business's profit motive cuts against the public interest.

As I write in "The Privatization of Everything," a new book that I co-authored with Allen Mikaelian, public goods are the things we can all use together, things with no winners or losers. From public schools to clean water and COVID-19 vaccines, public goods are supposed to benefit everyone.

And they're as American as apple pie. We realized long ago that everyone benefits from public education—even if they don't have school-age children. We also figured out that a public fire department available to everyone, it turns out, keeps everyone safe. We could've made all our roads into toll roads, but we decided that it would be better for both the economy and each of us individually if the public controlled most roads.

That's why we can't let our state and local leaders sign expensive public-private partnerships that give away control over our roads, bridges and other infrastructure. Our country sorely needs rebuilding. We can't afford to mess this up.

SUPPLY CHAIN

From Page 8

Several ventures are trying to help firms manage their return process. ReturnGo uses an analytics-driven solution so firms can make return decisions informed by logistical costs and customer lifetime value. For example, for certain products, the advice would be to let a loyal customer keep the product and get a refund, if the cost of shipping it is higher than its resell value.

Another solution is mixing the online and offline retail experience. For example, 44% of respondents in the online shopping survey said they still prefer to return an item in person, which can help firms reduce shipping costs. The same survey showed that 57% of customers returning an item would still shop from the same merchant even if they had to pay shipping costs to make a return. And with the pandemic interfering less with in-person shopping, traditional stores can serve as a return center and as they were originally intended: a place to try to find the best suitable products in person.

Running an omnichannel operation, in which firms integrate the different sales channels that include online and brick-and-mortar stores, requires some scale, but the advantages can be significant, since the trend of favorable and flexible return policies is not going to go away.

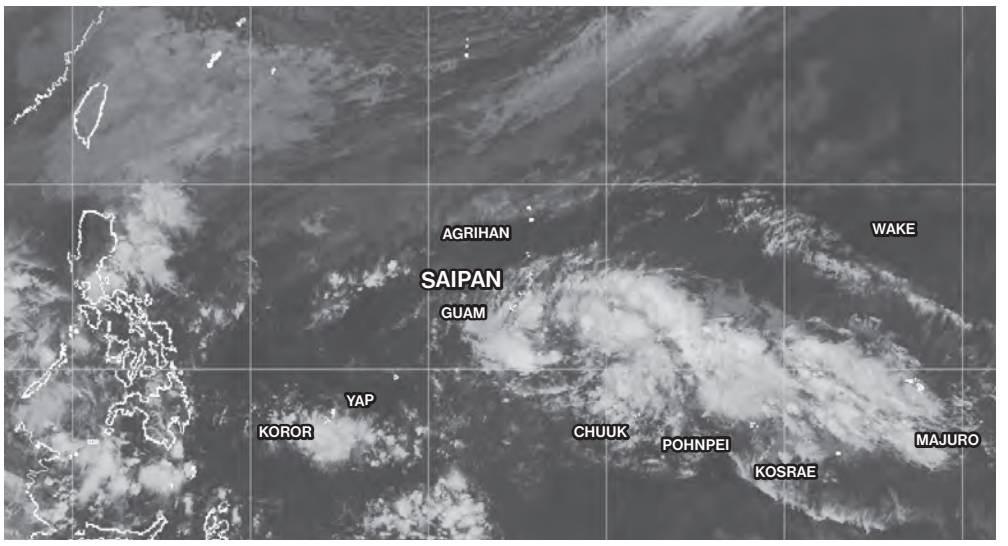
The current supply chain crisis is exposing more and more inefficiencies—such as long delays at ports and massive shortages for some products, including toilet paper and kettlebells. Given the uncertainty around shipping dates and product availability, people may be overordering and returning more than usual after the holidays. So, during your holiday shopping, do your part to stem return culture by choosing carefully—and aiming to buy for keeps.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy with numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms. East to southeast winds 10 to 20 mph with gusts of 25 mph near showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
83° 77°	87° 78°	87° 78°	87° 78°	87° 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:28 AM, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A disturbance is centered just to our east/southeast with scattered to numerous showers and east to northeast winds of 15 to 25 knots. Satellite shows a large frontal system pushing off of Japan. Ipan buoy pegs seas at 8 feet this morning with an overnight altimetry pass showing 10 foot seas to our east.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	86° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:25 AM	5:44 PM
Tuesday	6:26 AM	5:44 PM
Wednesday	6:27 AM	5:44 PM
Thursday	6:27 AM	5:44 PM
Friday	6:28 AM	5:45 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	1:08 AM	1:46 PM	-
Tuesday	2:01 AM	2:26 PM	-
Wednesday	2:56 AM	3:08 PM	-
Thursday	3:54 AM	3:53 PM	-
Friday	4:56 AM	4:42 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Cloudy	72° / 61°
Beijing	Sunny	34° / 19°
Hong Kong	Showers	79° / 72°
Honolulu	Showers	81° / 73°
London	Mostly Sunny	43° / 36°
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	75° / 55°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 79°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	93° / 70°
Miami	Thunderstorms	79° / 73°
New York	Sunny	57° / 47°
Osaka	Showers	64° / 52°
Paris	Showers	46° / 32°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	55° / 48°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	54° / 36°
Salem	Sunny	67° / 47°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	58° / 48°
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	37° / 19°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	64° / 48°
Washington, DC	Sunny	61° / 43°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
2:02 AM	Low Tide	1.19
8:43 AM	High Tide	0.22
3:47 PM	Low Tide	1.77
10:26 PM	High Tide	0.59

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4, 5
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Shippers prepare for another pandemic crush of holiday gifts

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)—The last holiday season was far from the most wonderful time of the year for the U.S. Postal Service: Sick and quarantined workers, a flood of packages from shoppers loath to set foot in stores and a last-minute dump of packages from overwhelmed private shippers.

Postal workers who recall packages and letters piled up in distribution hubs are better prepared this time as they gear up for another pandemic crunch. But low product inventories, and port and supply chain disruptions are creating new uncertainty about getting gifts delivered.

Already, workers are seeing a surge in holiday packages that began several weeks ago.

"A lot of the workers are saying, 'Oh no. Here we go again,'" said Scott Adams, local president of the American Postal Workers Union in Portland.

The U.S. Postal Service and private shippers UPS and FedEx are bolstering their hiring—bringing in about 230,000 temporary workers—and taking other steps to ensure they don't become overwhelmed by packages.

Nearly 3.4 billion parcels are expected to crisscross the country this holiday season, representing an estimated increase of about 400 million compared to last year, said Satish Jindel, from Pennsylvania-based ShipMatrix, which analyzes shipping package data.

A postal carrier loads boxes into his delivery vehicle, Monday, Nov. 8, 2021, in Portland, Maine. AP

When cards and letters are included, the U.S. Postal Service said it'll be delivering more than 12 billion items.

"The pandemic is still here. The supply chain is a challenge that's going to impact how people shop and how products move," said Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, which represents more than 200,000 postal workers.

Despite the precarious situation, the Postal Service, UPS and FedEx are in better shape to handle the peak volume, and several trends could work in their favor, Jindel said.

More people are shopping in stores compared to last year, and people have been placing online orders earlier because they're keenly aware of supply chain problems, Jindel said. Also, with workers returning to offices, there are fewer office supply shipments being made to homes, he said.

Most importantly, the shippers are adapting after their rough-and-tumble experience last year, he said.

U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, who faced withering criticism last year but reported on-time improvements and reduced operating losses this month, says the service is ready for the crunch.

"We are ready, so send us your packages and your mail," he said.

A year ago, more than a third of Postal Service first-class mail was late by the time Christmas arrived.

Tractor-trailers stuffed with mail were left idling outside some postal-sorting facilities. Packages and letters piled up in distribution hubs. Delays grew by days, and then weeks, in many instances.

Two things were painfully obvious. More workers and more space were needed—and both are being addressed.

To get a handle of the volume, the Postal Service is transitioning more than 30,000 non-career employees to the ranks of career employees by peak season, hiring 40,000 seasonal employees, and leasing extra space at more than 100 locations to ensure there's room for parcels.

The Postal Service installed more than 100 new package sorting machines as of early November, part of $40 billion of planned investment over 10 years. Also, more than 50 package systems capable of sorting large packages are expected to be deployed before December. Combined, these expand capacity by an additional 4.5 million packages per day, officials said.

UPS, for its part, is hiring more than 100,000 seasonal employees across the country and continues to add aircraft and automation. It expects nearly 90% of its packages to flow through automated facilities by year's end.

FedEx, meanwhile, is in the process of boosting its nationwide workforce by 90,000 across its operating companies. Most of those new workers are expected to remain after the holidays, the company said.

Despite all those extra workers, the shippers agree that this is not the year for shoppers to procrastinate.

Black Friday is back but it's not what it used to be

NEW YORK (AP)—On this year's Black Friday, things almost seem normal.

Malls and stores report decent-sized crowds, if not the floods of people that used to fight over the latest toys and electronics—online shopping is much too common for that now, and discounts are both more subdued and spread out over the weeks leading up to Christmas, on both websites and in stores.

Out-of-stock items due to supply crunches, higher prices for gas and food, and labor shortages that make it more difficult to respond to customers are also causing frustrations for shoppers.

Christian MacDonald, the first person in a line of about 75 people waiting for a Costa Mesa, California Target store to open, came away empty-handed.

"I came here because I figured since it was Black Friday, they'd have the new Switch OLED in stock, but they didn't," said MacDonald, who waited an hour and a half to get in for the sought-after Nintendo video game console. "So I'm just going to go home, I guess."

The country's largest mall, the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota, said nearly 100,000 people had come as of early afternoon Friday, more than double last year but a bit shy of 2019 numbers.

"We had a fantastic start," said Mall of America senior vice president Jill Renslow.

The staffing issues that have hit many retailers and restaurants, however, also affected Mall of America. It had to trim the hours it was open.

Still, Black Friday retail sales surged 29.8% through mid-afternoon, according to Mastercard SpendingPulse, which tracks all types of payments, including cash and credit cards. That was above its 20% growth forecast for the day.

South African scientists brace for wave propelled by omicron

JOHANNESBURG (AP)—Worried scientists in South Africa are scrambling to combat the lightning spread across the country of the new and highly transmissible omicron COVID-19 variant as the world grapples with its emergence.

In the space of two weeks, the omicron variant has sent South Africa from a period of low transmission to rapid growth of new confirmed cases. The country's numbers are still relatively low, with 2,828 new confirmed cases recorded Friday, but omicron's speed in infecting young South Africans has alarmed health professionals.

"We're seeing a marked change in the demographic profile of patients with COVID-19," Rudo Mathivha, head of the intensive care unit at Soweto's Baragwanath Hospital, told an online press briefing.

"Young people, in their 20s to just over their late 30s, are coming in with moderate to severe disease, some needing intensive care. About 65% are not vaccinated and most of the rest are only half-vaccinated," said Mathivha. "I'm worried that as the numbers go up, the public health care facilities will become overwhelmed."

A petrol attendant stands next to a newspaper headline in Pretoria, South Africa, Saturday, Nov. 27, 2021. AP

She said urgent preparations are needed to enable public hospitals to cope with a potential large influx of patients needing intensive care.

"We know we have a new variant," said Mathivha. "The worst case scenario is that it hits us like delta ... we need to have critical care beds ready."

What looked like a cluster infection among some university students in Pretoria ballooned into hundreds of new cases and then thousands, first in the capital city and then to nearby Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city.

Studying the surge, scientists identified the new variant that diagnostic tests indicate is likely responsible for as many as 90% of the new cases, according to South Africa's health officials. Early studies show that it has a reproduction rate of 2—meaning that every person infected by it is likely to spread it to two other people.

The new variant has a high number of mutations that appear to make it more transmissible and help it evade immune responses. The World Health Organization looked at the data on Friday and named the variant omicron, under its system of using Greek letters, calling it a highly transmissible variant of concern.

"It's a huge concern. We all are terribly concerned about this virus," Professor Willem Hanekom, director of the Africa Health Research Institute, told The Associated Press.

"This variant is mostly in Gauteng province, the Johannesburg area of South Africa. But we've got clues from diagnostic tests ... that suggest that this variant is already all over South Africa," said Hanekom, who is also co-chair of the South African COVID Variant Research Consortium.

"The scientific reaction from within South Africa is that we need to learn as much as soon as possible. We know precious little," he said. "For example, we do not know how virulent this virus is, which means how bad is this disease that it causes?"

Nation

Will flight restrictions help as new virus variant emerges?

A new coronavirus variant identified in southern Africa is leading to a new round of travel restrictions just as many had finally begun to ease.

The risks of the variant, called omicron, are largely unknown. But the World Health Organization has called it a "variant of concern" and governments around the world are not waiting for scientists to better understand the variant to impose flight bans and other travel restrictions.

The U.S. said Friday it will ban travel from South Africa and seven other African nations by non-US citizens beginning Monday. European Union nations agreed earlier in the day to impose a ban on travel from southern Africa to counter the variant's spread. The U.K., Canada and other countries have imposed similar restrictions.

The moves have renewed a debate over whether flight bans and other travel restrictions work to prevent the spread of new variants. Some say at best the restrictions can buy time for new public health measures to be put in place. At worst, they do little to stop the spread and give a false sense of security.

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said it strongly discouraged imposing travel bans on people coming from countries where the variant was reported.

DO TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS SLOW THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS?

They might buy countries more time to speed up vaccination and introduce other measures, like masking and social distancing, but they are highly unlikely to prevent the entry of new variants, said Mark Woolhouse, a professor of infectious diseases at the University of Edinburgh.

"Travel restrictions can delay but not prevent the spread of a highly transmissible variant," he said.

People line up to get on the Air France flight to Paris at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, South Africa, Friday Nov. 26, 2021. AP

Johns Hopkins University infectious disease specialist Dr. Amesh Adalja says the travel restrictions only give the public a false sense of security and should stop being the "knee-jerk" reaction by public officials. Adalja noted imposing restrictions makes politicians "look as if they're doing something" but doesn't make sense when countries now have countermeasures such as rapid tests and vaccines.

Meanwhile, Sweden's chief epidemiologist, Anders Tegnell told a local news agency said he does not believe that a travel ban would have any major effect, other than for countries with direct flights to the affected areas.

"It is basically impossible to keep track of all travel flows," Tegnell told the Expressen newspaper.

COULD IT BE DIFFERENT THIS TIME?

Jeffrey Barrett, director of COVID-19 Genetics at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, thought that the early detection of the new variant could mean restrictions taken now would have a bigger impact than when the delta variant first emerged.

"The surveillance is so good in South Africa and other nearby countries that they found this (new variant), understood it was a problem and told the world very fast about it," he said. "We may be at an earlier point with this new variant so there may still be time to do something about it."

However, Barrett said harsh restrictions would be counterproductive and that the South African officials should not be punished for alerting the world to the new variant. "They've done the world a service and we must help them, not penalize them for this."

High inflation? Low polling? White House blames the pandemic

WASHINGTON (AP)—Inflation is soaring, businesses are struggling to hire and President Joe Biden's poll numbers have been in free fall. The White House sees a common culprit for it all: COVID-19.

Biden's team views the pandemic as the root cause of both the nation's malaise and his own political woes. Finally controlling COVID-19, the White House believes, is the skeleton key to rejuvenating the country and reviving Biden's own standing.

Biden

But the coronavirus challenge has proved to be vexing for the White House, with last summer's premature claims of victory swamped by the more transmissible delta variant, millions of Americans going unvaccinated and lingering economic effects from the pandemic's darkest days.

All of that as yet another variant of the virus, omicron, emerged overseas. It is worrying public health officials, leading to new travel bans and panicking markets as scientists race to understand how dangerous it may be.

Although the economy has actually been coming back, there are multiple signs that COVID-19 will leave its scars even if the pandemic fades.

For now, in the administration's view, an intransigent minority that is resisting vaccination is spoiling the recovery for the rest of the country—forcing masks on the vaccinated and contributing to lingering anxiousness everywhere you look.

Asked why Americans aren't getting the message that the economy is improving, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said this past week: "We're still in the middle of fighting a pandemic and people are sick and tired of that. We are, too."

The state of affairs, she said, affects everything from how people feel about sending their kids out the door to the price for a gallon of gas.

The administration views vaccination mandates as critical, not only to preventing avoidable illness and death but to safeguarding the economic recovery—and salvaging Biden's political position.

"We have the tools to accelerate the path out of this pandemic widely available," White House COVID-19 coordinator Jeff Zients told a coronavirus briefing. While he ruled out large-scale lockdowns like the United States experienced in 2020 and like those popping up again across Europe, Zients renewed the administration's appeals for more Americans to get their shots.

But on Friday, the discovery of the new variant in southern Africa had much of the world acting to shut down travel from the region and contain a threat that the World Health Organization suggested could be worse than the ravaging waves from delta.

ACROSS THE NATION

Nashville police: 3 dead, 4 wounded in apartment shooting

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—A shooting in a Tennessee apartment left three people dead, including a suspect, police said Saturday. Four other people were wounded. Six members of a family were shot at the Nashville apartment Friday night, including a 15-year-old and 18-year-old who were both killed, police said in a statement. Also killed in the shooting was suspect Christian Akail Johnson, 29, of Nashville. According to the survivors, Johnson and another individual entered the residence with guns after knocking on the front door, investigators said. Robbery is among the motives being considered, police said. The statement from police did not indicate the whereabouts of the second suspect. Police identified the others who died as brothers Zacquez Sherrell, 18, and Tavarius Sherrell, 15. Four others were wounded: their 40-year-old mother, two sisters ages 16 and 20, and a 13-year-old brother. All were expected to recover, the statement said. Three guns were recovered from inside the apartment.

Feds apprehend stowaway on flight from Guatemala to Miami

MIAMI (AP)—Federal authorities have taken into custody a 26-year-old man who apparently stowed away in the landing gear compartment of an American Airlines fight that arrived at Miami International Airport from Guatemala on Saturday morning. The man was in the wheel well area when the flight arrived from Guatemala City, Guatemala, at 10:06 a.m., officials said. News outlets reported that Flight 1182 was met by law enforcement due to a security issue. U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers took the man into custody, the agency said in a news release. Medics took the man to a hospital for a medical assessment. "Persons are taking extreme risks when they try to conceal themselves in confined spaces such as an aircraft," the agency said. The news release didn't say whether the man will face any charges, or what will happen to him when he's released from the hospital.

Man arrested in woman's deadly plunge down NYC subway stairs

NEW YORK (AP)—A man suspected in a deadly mugging on a subway station stairway was arrested four months later after someone spotted him in Central Park and called a tip line, police said Saturday. David Robinson, 53, appeared in court a day after his arrest on manslaughter charges in the death of Htwe Than Than. A request for comment was sent to his defense attorney. Police said the 58-year-old victim was walking up some steps in a station in Manhattan's Chinatown with her 22-year-old son on July 17 when Robinson grabbed the son's backpack, propelling both son and mother down the stairs. She was in a coma for several days before succumbing to her injuries. Robinson told police he became angry "because he believed the man had thrown garbage at him," according to a criminal complaint. He claimed the 22-year-old man grabbed onto his mother as he tumbled backward, causing her to fall as well.

Donations pour in for Missouri man freed after 43 years

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—More than $1.4 million had been raised as of Saturday for a man who spent 43 years behind bars before a judge overturned his conviction in a triple killing. The Midwest Innocence Project set up the GoFundMe fundraiser as they fought for Kevin Strickland's release, noting that he wouldn't receive compensation from Missouri and would need help paying for basic living expenses. The state only allows wrongful imprisonment payments to people who were exonerated through DNA evidence, so the 62-year-old Strickland wouldn't qualify. Judge James Welsh, a retired Missouri Court of Appeals judge, ordered his release on Tuesday, finding that evidence used to convict Strickland had since been recanted or disproven. By Saturday evening, more than $1.45 million had been donated to help Strickland. Strickland has always maintained that he was home watching television and had nothing to do with the killings, which happened in 1978 when he was 18 years old. As he left prison, he said he was "thankful for God walking me through this for 43 years."

News crew guard dies after being shot in attempted robbery

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—A security guard has died after he was shot while he protected a San Francisco Bay Area television news crew covering a smash-and-grab theft, part of a rash of organized retail crime in the region. "We are devastated by the loss of security guard and our friend, Kevin Nishita. Our deepest sympathy goes to Kevin's wife, his children, his family, and to all his friends and colleagues," KRON-TV's vice president and general manager, Jim Rose, said in a statement issued Saturday. Nishita was an armed guard for Star Protection Agency and provided security for television news crews in the region, who are often targeted by robbers for their equipment. He was shot in the abdomen during an attempted robbery of KRON-TV's camera equipment near downtown Oakland on Wednesday, police said.

World

Japan PM vows to step up defense amid China, NK threats

TOKYO (AP)—Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, at his first troop review Saturday, renewed his pledge to consider "all options," including acquiring enemy base strike capability, and vowed to create a stronger Self-Defense Force to protect the country amid growing threats from China and North Korea.

Kishida said the security situation around Japan is rapidly changing and that "the reality is severer than ever," with North Korea continuing to test-fire ballistic missiles while advancing its capability, and China pursuing a military buildup and increasingly assertive activity in the region.

"I will consider all options, including possessing so-called enemy base strike capability, to pursue strengthening of defense power that is necessary," Kishida said in an address to hundreds of Ground Self-Defense Force members in olive-colored helmets and uniforms.

Kishida, who took office in October, served as top commander for the first time at Saturday's Self-Defense Force troop review held at the main army base Camp Asaka, north of Tokyo. About 800 troops gathered for the inspection, according to the Defense Ministry.

"The security environment surrounding Japan has been rapidly changing at an unprecedented speed. Things that used to happen only in science-fiction novels are today's reality," Kishida said. He said his government will lead "calm and realistic" discussions to determine what is needed to protect people's lives and gain their understanding.

The possibility of possessing so-called enemy base strike capability has been a divisive issue because opponents say it violates Japan's war-renouncing Constitution.

Kishida has shifted his dovish stance to a more hawkish one, apparently to please influential leaders within his governing party, including former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and to strengthen his grip on power. He now advocates increasing Japanese military capability and spending.

On Friday, Kishida's Cabinet approved a 770 billion yen ($6.8 billion) request for an extra defense budget through March to expedite the purchase of missiles, anti-submarine rockets and other weapons amid rising concern over the escalation of military activities by China, Russia and North Korea.

The request, still pending parliamentary approval, is a record for an extra defense budget and will bring Japan's military spending for the current year to a new high of more than 6.1 trillion yen ($53.2 billion), up 15% from 5.31 trillion yen in 2020. The combined budget for 2021 will be just over 1% of Japan's GDP, keeping its customary cap.

Kishida has said he is open to doubling Japan's military spending to cope with the worsening security environment. Critics also say Japan, as the world's fastest-aging country with a shrinking population, should allocate more money toward health care and other services.

UK'S FIRST WINTER STORM

Huge waves crash the against the lighthouse in Seaham Harbor after gusts of almost 100 miles (160 km) per hour battered some areas of the country during Storm Arwen, in Durham, England, Saturday Nov. 27, 2021. At least three people have died in the U.K. after the year's first winter storm battered parts of the countries. Arwen hit parts of the north of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland particularly hard late Friday and early Saturday. Three men—one in each of those parts of the U.K.—died as trees were blown over. The storm, which also caused road closures, train delays, power cuts and high waves, abated Saturday. AP

WORLD BRIEFS

8 dead in gunbattles in central Mexico state of Zacatecas

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A pair of gunbattles in the central Mexico state of Zacatecas has left eight men dead. State prosecutors said Saturday that vehicles and guns were found at the scene of the shootouts near the town of Valparaiso, which is located near the border with Jalisco state. The gunmen may have been killed in turf battles between the Jalisco and Sinaloa cartels. National Guard and army troops responded to the shootings, but the dead have not yet been identified. The shootings late Friday came three days after police discovered three more bodies hung from a highway overpass in Zacatecas, where 10 other bodies were found the previous week, nine of them hanging from an overpass. On Wednesday, the Mexican army announced that it will send three helicopter gunships to Zacatecas, a weapon that President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has expressly said he no longer wants to use or accept from the United States.

Burkina Faso security forces fire tear gas at protesters

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP)—Security forces fired tear gas at protesters throwing rocks in Burkina Faso's capital on Saturday, as tensions rose across the conflict-riddled nation with the population angry at the government's inability to stem violence linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. Several hundred protestors took to the streets, calling for President Roch Marc Christian Kabore to resign. The army and police drove through downtown Ouagadougou, the capital, during clashes with protesters, who barricaded streets, set fire to tires and threw rocks and bricks. "We refuse to lose Burkina Faso. We will put in someone who is competent to assure the security of the nation," said Isaac Pagberam. "We've already lost two-thirds of our territory, nobody can travel the country in peace. We say no! We can't sit until the jihadis come to Ouagadougou to kill us."

500 vigilantes gather in Mexico town, pledge to aid police

NUEVO URECHO, Mexico (AP)—Extortion of avocado growers in western Mexico has gotten so bad that 500 vigilantes from a so-called "self-defense" group known as United Towns, or Pueblos Unidos, gathered Saturday and pledged to aid police. The vigilantes gathered for a rally in the town of Nuevo Urecho, in the western state of Michoacan, armed with AR-15s and other rifles, as well as a motley collection of shotguns. They said that drug cartels like the Viagras and the Jalisco cartel have been charging avocado growers 'war taxes' of about $1,000 per acre ($2,500 per hectare). Tired of the extortion demands and kidnappings, growers and farmers formed the group in 2020, and it now claims to have almost 3,000 members. "Several of us have been victims of this situation, of kidnappings, extortions," said one masked vigilante leader who asked his name not be used for fear of reprisals from the gangs. For the moment, the vigilantes appeared willing to respond to a pledge by Gov. Alfredo Ramirez Bedolla to disarm the state's various 'self defense' groups.

IN LOVING MEMORY

Marianne Banyasz Kara

Lovingly known as Maya

SEPTEMBER 10, 1945 – NOVEMBER 19, 2021

All conditioned things are impermanent.
They are arising and passing away.
Understanding this deeply,
Brings the greatest happiness which is peace.

Maya is Survived by her:
Loving Husband: Bruce L. Mailman

Children:
Lila M. & Broc Calvo (Liam)
Jewel A. Villacorte & Mike Santos (Aurora Sage & Juraiah)
Brian Geza Mailman

Extended Family: Mailman & Kara, LLC Family, Julita Alcon and Arminda C. Simbol

We wish to express our gratitude and appreciation to our families, friends, colleagues, the Commonwealth Cancer Association, CHCC Oncology Department, Dr. Peter Brett, Mary Lou Stevens, Mary Quinn Rozkydal, Salome Castro & all the CHCC doctors, nurses and staff who took special care of Maya during her stay at the hospital. As we grieve the loss of our beloved Maya, we are comforted by your actions and thoughts.

Viewing will be held at the Borja Funeral Home on Wednesday, December 1, 2021 from 9AM to 10AM.

In lieu of flowers, we request that you send donations to the Commonwealth Cancer Association.

Thank you, Köszönöm, Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Maraming Salamat Po, Mesulang and Ghilisou!

FROM THE FAMILY

Health & Wellness

This advertorial is sponsored by Tan Holdings HEALTH IS WEALTH Tan Siu Lin Foundation

Who else is still recovering from Thanksgiving?

By SARA M. MONIUSZKO
USA TODAY

Thanksgiving is over, but I'm still recovering. Anyone else?

Don't get me wrong, I had a wonderful Thanksgiving with loved ones, but from cooking to cleaning—I'm ready to really relax this weekend!

Although my Thanksgiving was only with two other people, it took a lot from my social battery as well.

I'm not used to hosting and entertaining since the pandemic has kept us separated for so long, so it was like exercising a muscle I haven't used in a while.

Even though I'm worn out, it's a good, happy kind of exhaustion. Getting to share the holiday with those closest to me meant so much—and our little feast turned out pretty well too, if I do say so myself!

We also made sure to have some other fun with board games and movie nights. So not only is my tummy happy and full (thanks to Turkey Day leftovers), so is my heart.

'Overindulged' at your Thanksgiving dinner? Here's why it isn't a big deal.

Thanksgiving dinner is that time of year that people worry about their food intake.

But does feasting during your holiday meal make a big difference for your body? According to experts, not really.

"It isn't that big of a deal over the long term for most people. Research suggests that it's the behaviors you sustain over time—so think weeks, months, years—that are going to have big impacts on your life and your health as opposed to focusing in on just one day or even one meal within a day," says Dr. Rachelle Reed, senior director of health science and research for Orangetheory Fitness.

This is because an isolated event, like a big holiday meal, isn't likely to disrupt our body's composition, which does a good job at maintaining itself, explains Evan Matthews, associate professor of exercise science and physical education at Montclair State University.

"We don't gain fat quickly, and we don't lose fat quickly... The things that are going to most impact your body composition are going to be lifestyle," he says. "If you only over-consume here or there at special events, it's unlikely that it's going to make a dramatic impact on your weight."

While eating more than usual during a holiday meal might be enjoyable for some, not everyone has the same relationship with food. For people who struggle with eating disorders, even the word "overindulging" can be triggering since it puts a "moral value on the amount of food that's being consumed," explains Chelsea M. Kronengold, communications lead at the National Eating Disorders Association.

"Just the thought of food-focused holidays can be overwhelming and cause anxiety for people that are struggling with eating disorders," she says. "Unfortunately, diet culture is rampant during Thanksgiving and other food-focused holidays."

Mayo Clinic Q&A: COVID-19 vaccine boosters and third doses

By CYNTHIA WEISS
MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: Both of my parents have been vaccinated for COVID-19. The doctor told my mom she is eligible for a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, but my dad is not eligible for a booster now. Can you explain who needs an additional vaccine now, and the differences between a booster and third dose.

ANSWER: It's good to know that your parents are among the millions of people who have been vaccinated for COVID-19. A primary vaccine, such as the one your parents have received, is intended to build an initial immune response.

Although viruses constantly change through mutation, and new variants can occur, such as with the COVID-19 delta variant, vaccination is an important step in the fight against the virus. Being vaccinated for COVID-19 can protect you from becoming infected and possibly infecting those around you, but it also can lessen the severity of illness if you are infected.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that people 65 and older who have been vaccinated have a significantly reduced risk of hospitalization if they become infected with COVID-19.

As far as the booster shot and the third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, the main difference is really the purpose of the shot and the status of the person receiving the shot.

The primary vaccination series is intended to build an initial immune response. However, some people need more coverage.

Think of it like painting a house. You sometimes can get good coverage with one coat of paint, but occasionally you might need two or even three coats of paint to get that good coverage. It's the same way with vaccines.

In the case of COVID-19 messenger RNA vaccines, like Moderna and Pfizer, some people might have a great response to one dose. But most people need two doses of these vaccines to get a great response.

We also know that people who are immunocompromised—those whose immune systems aren't working well—often need additional vaccine doses to improve vaccination effectiveness.

In early August, it was recommended that moderately or severely immunocompromised people 12 and older who received the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines receive a third dose at least 28 days after completing the initial series. Immunosuppressed or immunocompromised refers to those who have medical conditions that compromise the immune system, or patients who require treatment with immunosuppressant medications, such as chemotherapy. People with a weakened immune system have a more difficult time fighting off infection than a healthy person.

People who are otherwise healthy, do not have one of the specific conditions, or take certain medications are not eligible for a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

At this time, an additional dose is not recommended for those who received the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

Over time, though, as with other viruses, immunity may start to wane. And the purpose of a booster vaccine is to be a reminder to the immune system. So, like the paint analogy, you might need another coat of paint down the road when the initial one starts to wear thin or get stains on it. Giving another coat of paint is like giving a booster.

With COVID-19, the immunity people achieved from their initial vaccination has been reduced with respect to the delta variant. That is why there are so-called "breakthrough infections," where people are getting infected with COVID-19 even after being vaccinated for COVID-19.

The good news is that it's primarily waning mostly against mild infection. The incidence is still rare, and typically those cases are mild, as the early vaccine doses are still protecting against severe infection and hospitalization.

But clearly, the delta variant has some resistance to that vaccination, and the goal is to stop the spread of any form of infection. So boosters most likely will be recommended for everyone, and administration of those boosters probably will begin with the same groups who were prioritized for initial vaccinations: health care workers, long-term care residents, seniors and people with high-risk health conditions.

We expect more guidance from the CDC over the coming weeks after more data from studies are available. It is likely that healthy people who received two doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine will be eligible for a booster shot but the exact time frame is not yet known. Right now, boosters will consist of the same formulation as the original vaccine. But that could change over time, too.

Based on current data, side effects from a third dose are similar to what was experienced with a second dose: headache, fatigue, low-grade fever and some muscle aches. And those side effects still happen quickly after vaccination and resolve on their own within two to three days.

Health care providers are still learning about COVID-19. In the meantime, you need to do everything you can to continue to protect yourself, which means that, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status, continue social distancing and continue masking, as these safety measures are known to help. And if you haven't had the primary vaccination series yet, now is the time to do so.

Dr. Melanie Swift , Preventive Medicine, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota

Information in this post was accurate at the time of its posting. Due to the fluid nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, scientific understanding, along with guidelines and recommendations, may have changed since the original publication date. ©2021 Mayo Clinic News Network. Visit newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Life & Style

Towering musical theater master Stephen Sondheim dies at 91

NEW YORK (AP)—Stephen Sondheim, the songwriter who reshaped the American musical theater in the second half of the 20th century with his intelligent, intricately rhymed lyrics, his use of evocative melodies and his willingness to tackle unusual subjects, has died. He was 91.

Sondheim's death was announced by Rick Miramontez, president of DKC/O&M. Sondheim's Texas-based attorney, Rick Pappas, told The New York Times the composer died Friday at his home in Roxbury, Connecticut.

Sondheim influenced several generations of theater songwriters, particularly with such landmark musicals as "Company," "Follies" and "Sweeney Todd," which are considered among his best work. His most famous ballad, "Send in the Clowns," has been recorded hundreds of times, including by Frank Sinatra and Judy Collins.

The artist refused to repeat himself, finding inspiration for his shows in such diverse subjects as an Ingmar Bergman movie ("A Little Night Music"), the opening of Japan to the West ("Pacific Overtures"), French painter Georges Seurat ("Sunday in the Park With George"), Grimm's fairy tales ("Into the Woods") and even the killers of American presidents ("Assassins"), among others.

"The theater has lost one of its greatest geniuses and the world has lost one of its greatest and most original writers. Sadly, there is now a giant in the sky. But the brilliance of Stephen Sondheim will still be here as his legendary songs and shows will be performed for evermore," producer Cameron Mackintosh wrote in tribute.

Six of Sondheim's musicals won Tony Awards for best score, and he also received a Pulitzer Prize ("Sunday in the Park"), an Academy Award (for the song "Sooner or Later" from the film "Dick Tracy"), five Olivier Awards and the Presidential Medal of Honor. In 2008, he received a Tony Award for lifetime achievement.

Sondheim

Sondheim's music and lyrics gave his shows a dark, dramatic edge, whereas before him, the dominant tone of musicals was frothy and comic. He was sometimes criticized as a composer of unhummable songs, a badge that didn't bother Sondheim. Frank Sinatra, who had a hit with Sondheim's "Send in the Clowns," once complained: "He could make me a lot happier if he'd write more songs for saloon singers like me."

To theater fans, Sondheim's sophistication and brilliance made him an icon. A Broadway theater was named after him. A New York magazine cover asked "Is Sondheim God?" The Guardian newspaper once offered this question: "Is Stephen Sondheim the Shakespeare of musical theatre?"

He offered the three principles necessary for a songwriter in his first volume of collected lyrics—Content Dictates Form, Less Is More, and God Is in the Details. All these truisms, he wrote, were "in the service of Clarity, without which nothing else matters." Together they led to stunning lines like: "It's a very short road from the pinch and the punch to the paunch and the pouch and the pension."

Taught by no less a genius than Oscar Hammerstein, Sondheim pushed the musical into a darker, richer and more intellectual place. "If you think of a theater lyric as a short story, as I do, then every line has the weight of a paragraph," he wrote in his 2010 book, "Finishing the Hat," the first volume of his collection of lyrics and comments.

Afghan girl from famous cover portrait is evacuated to Italy

ROME (AP)—National Geographic magazine's famed green-eyed "Afghan Girl" has arrived in Italy as part of the West's evacuation of Afghans following the Taliban takeover of the country, the Italian government said Thursday.

The office of Premier Mario Draghi said Italy organized the evacuation of Sharbat Gulla after she asked to be helped to leave the country. The Italian government will now help to get her integrated into life in Italy, the statement said.

Gulla gained international fame in 1984 as an Afghan refugee girl, after war photographer Steve McCurry's photograph of her, with piercing green eyes, was published on the cover of National Geographic. McCurry found her again in 2002.

In 2014, she surfaced in Pakistan but went into hiding when authorities accused her of buying a fake Pakistani identity card and ordered her deported. She was flown to Kabul where the president hosted a reception for her at the presidential palace and handed her keys to a new apartment.

In this file photo taken on Oct. 26, 2016, Pakistan's Inam Khan, owner of a book shop shows a copy of a magazine with the photograph of Afghan refugee woman Sharbat Gulla, from his rare collection in Islamabad, Pakistan.
AP

Italy was one of several Western countries that airlifted hundreds of Afghans out of the country following the departure of U.S. forces and the Taliban takeover in August.

In a statement announcing Gulla's arrival in Rome, Draghi's office said her photograph had come to "symbolize the vicissitudes and conflict of the chapter in history that Afghanistan and its people were going through at the time."

It said it had received requests "by those in civil society, and in particular by non-profit organizations working in Afghanistan" backing Gulla's plea for help to leave the country.

Italy organized her travel to Italy "as part of the wider evacuation program in place for Afghan citizens and the government's plan for their reception and integration," the statement said.

Macy's Thanksgiving parade returns, with all the trimmings

NEW YORK (AP)—Giant balloons once again wafted through miles of Manhattan, wrangled by costumed handlers. High school and college marching bands from around the country were back, and so were the crowds at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

After being crimped by the coronavirus pandemic last year, the holiday tradition returned in full Thursday, though with precautions.

"It really made Thanksgiving feel very festive and full of life," Sierra Guardiola, a 23-year-old interior design firm assistant, said after watching the spectacle in a turkey-shaped hat.

Thousands of marchers, hundreds of clowns, dozens of balloons and floats—and, of course, Santa Claus—marked the latest U.S. holiday event to make a comeback as vaccines, familiarity and sheer frustration made officials and some of the public more comfortable with big gatherings amid the ongoing pandemic.

To President Joe Biden, the parade's full-fledged return was a sign of renewal, and he called NBC broadcaster Al Roker on-air to say so.

"After two years, we're back. America is back. There's nothing we're unable to overcome," Biden said over the phone from Nantucket, Massachusetts, where he was watching the broadcast with his family.

Still, safety measures continued. Parade staffers and volunteers had to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and wear masks, though some singers and performers were allowed to shed them. There was no inoculation requirement for spectators, but Macy's and the city encouraged them to cover their faces.

Working wife continues to support husband who left

DEAR ABBY: My husband of 35 years moved out three years ago. We live only a block apart, and I contribute a lot to his household because he's on disability and doesn't have enough money to make it through the month. I have a great job and travel as a photographer. My job is the reason he moved out. According to him, I was "gone too much."

Recently, we have discussed the possibility of divorcing. Although he hasn't done it yet, he has expressed interest in dating a man. But then he pulls me back in with the "I love you, and can't live without you" stuff. I don't know what to do. He is hostile when I'm away at work and constantly accuses me of cheating. I am at a loss. Please help.

IN A FIX IN ALABAMA

DEAR IN A FIX: If your estranged husband is expressing interest in dating another man, the chances are pretty good that he has already given it a try. Another tip-off is the fact that he is "constantly" accusing you of cheating. There's an old French saying that translates to something like this: "A man doesn't look behind the door unless he has stood there himself." Talk to an attorney and find out what the legal grounds for divorce are in the great state of Alabama. Adultery and desertion may be two of them, which means you might qualify.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My husband is a thoughtful, kind person and an excellent partner. Raised in the South, we were both taught to call people "ma'am" and "sir." Instead of reserving these terms only for older or more distinguished people, he uses them with everyone, including when speaking to our peers (we are in our early 40s). I have noticed that it's off-putting to some of my female friends when he refers to them as "Ms. (first name)" or "ma'am." They feel he's calling them old compared to himself, which I know is not his intention.

I've mentioned this to him a few times, but it's a habit he is finding hard to break. I don't want to hurt his feelings by constantly harping on something that seems insignificant, but I also want him to stop being quite so polite. Have you any advice for getting around this?

MANNERED IN THE SOUTH

DEAR MANNERED: Yes, I do. I'm advising you to stand by your man and straighten out your overly sensitive female friends. Assure them that this is the way both of you were raised, and the nicety is regional. It would be better than nagging your husband about it because he is doing nothing wrong by using those formalities.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: "Adam" and "Amanda" are dating. It is OK for Amanda to braid the long hair of her single, heterosexual male friend, "Adonis"? Or is she crossing a line in her relationship?

JUST WONDERING IN VIRGINIA

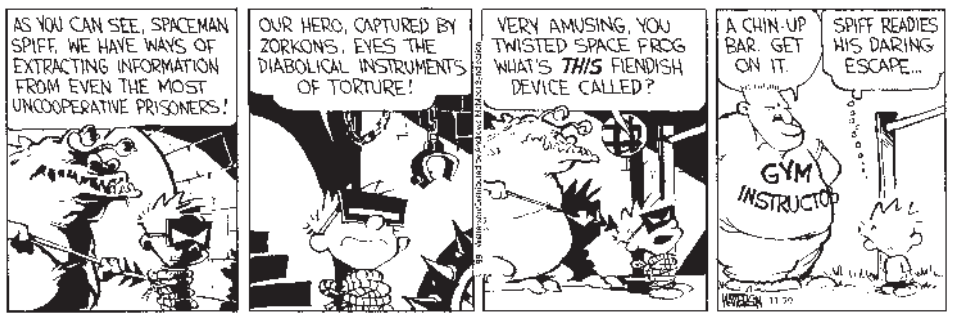
DEAR JUST WONDERING: If Adam doesn't like Amanda braiding Adonis' locks, he has a mouth and can use it to tell her to cut it out. Unless you are Adam, Adonis or Amanda, stay out of it and resist the urge to weigh in.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


AS YOU CAN SEE, SPACEMAN SPIFF, WE HAVE WAYS OF EXTRACTING INFORMATION FROM EVEN THE MOST UNCOOPERATIVE PRISONERS!
OUR HERO, CAPTURED BY ZORKONS, EYES THE DIABOLICAL INSTRUMENTS OF TORTURE!
VERY AMUSING, YOU TWISTED SPACE FROG. WHAT'S THIS FIENDISH DEVICE CALLED?
A CHIN-UP BAR. GET ON IT.
SPIFF READIES HIS DARING ESCAPE...
GYM INSTRUCTOR

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

CAN WE PUT THE TREE UP NOW?
SOON.
HOW ABOUT NOW?
YOU ASKED RIGHT AFTER I SAID "SOON." SOON MEANS "IN A BIT."
HAS IT BEEN A BIT YET?
GIVE IT THREE MORE SOONS AND A SHORTLY.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

AHHH.
DARN, IT'S SO DARK IN THERE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT WITH THE ADVANCEMENTS IN MEDICAL SCIENCE, IT STILL HASN'T BEEN DONE.
WHAT HASN'T BEEN DONE?
SOMEONE INVENTING A TONGUE-DEPRESSOR WITH A MOUNTED TACTICAL FLASHLIGHT.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Crèche trio
5 Glitch
8 Concept
12 Harrow rival
13 Texter's "As I see it"
14 Little lice
15 Gaming tyro
16 Sight-seeing stop
18 Open up, as a flag
20 Prods to action
21 "Star Wars" princess
23 Recipe abbr.
24 Price reduction
28 Heavy reading?
31 Kitchen gadget brand
32 Be nosy
34 Singer Carly — Jepsen
35 Stew veggies
37 Evidence of sudden braking
39 Narc's org.
41 Morales of "Jericho"
42 Rise
45 Spots in the ocean
49 March in place
51 "Phooey!"
52 Gratis
53 "Mayday!"
54 Austen novel
55 Bryn —
56 Very popular
57 En-grossed

DOWN

1 Carte
2 Like — of bricks
3 Blunder
4 Economical way to buy
5 Ginormous amount
6 Actress Thurman
7 Cymbal's kin
8 Deepest
9 Migration of a sort
10 To be, in Tours
11 Requests
17 Speck
19 Cincinnati team
22 Heard the alarm clock
24 Swab the deck
25 Chopper
26 Pothole repairers
27 Least quiet
29 Blemish
30 "A mouse!"
33 Hi-tech organizers
36 Quidditch position
38 Not as spicy
40 Busy insect
42 Like most car radios
43 Country singer Evans
44 Platter
46 Singer Franklin
47 Pack (down)
48 Sports figure?
50 Cattle call

Solution time: 26 mins.

A	S	H		C	H	A	G		C	H	U	D
P	I	I		R	E	P	O		O	O	Z	E
B	A	D	T	A	S	T	E		R	O		I
S	W	E	R	V	E		S	A	G			
			O	A	¯		B	R	I	E	S	
C	L	O	U	T		Y	A	K		E	G	O
H	I	N	T		B	E	D		S	C	A	B
A	M	E		L	A	P		E	T	O	N	S
D	O	C	O	O			B	A	A			
			B	U	S		I	T	H	A	C	A
Γ	I	J	I			F	E	L	L	B	A	D
	D	E	E		G	R	R	R			R	A
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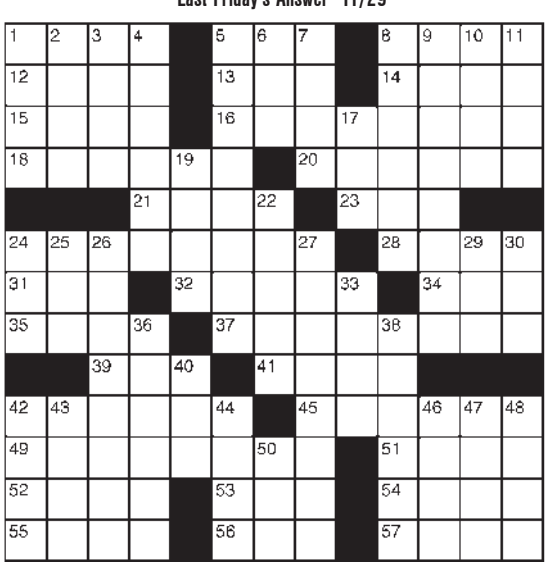
Last Friday's Answer 11/29



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Anna Faris, 45; Don Cheadle, 57; Andrew McCarthy, 59; Howie Mandel, 66.

Happy Birthday: Use your strengths to overcome your weaknesses and strive to do and be your best. Success will come knocking at your door. Set reasonable goals and expectations, and expand your knowledge and skill set to accommodate your dreams, hopes and wishes. Recognize what you have to offer, trust in those who are reliable. Making intelligent decisions will lead to stability and peace of mind. Your numbers are 7, 18, 21, 25, 32, 39, 48.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Delve in and get things done. Your energy and wit will draw others to your side and encourage opportunities that allow you to use your skills to your liking. Negotiations look promising, and an offer will lead to a long-term commitment. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Uncertainty will make you nervous about your future. Don't overreact or take on something you cannot handle. Be realistic and patient, and analyze whatever situation you face before you make impossible promises. Keep the peace and offer suggestions, not hands-on help. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Expand your interests, skills and knowledge to fit trends. Be creative, you'll develop a plan that helps you use your talents to drum up interest in something you want to pursue. Pay attention to partnerships and maintaining equality. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Keep your personal and professional problems separate. Letting your emotions filter through will ruin your concentration and stand between you and what you are trying to achieve. Change begins with you. Do what's necessary to keep moving forward. ✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Connect with someone who can offer clarity regarding a situation that perplexes you. Speak up, ask direct questions and find out where you stand. Digest the information you gather before you make a move. Anger and overreaction won't solve anything. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Live up to your word. Uncertainty and inconsistency will make others question your ability to get things done. Concentrate on self-improvement, and make a point to gather facts before you tackle someone or something outside your compass. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* If you want to make changes at home or to how you live, be prepared to do the labor yourself. Minimize expenses to fit your budget. Call on people who owe you who have the skills to get what you want. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Pay attention to what's going on at home and the changes others make. Reach out to people you can rely on to help you get what you want. Change the way you handle someone close to you, and it will ease responsibilities. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Keep the momentum flowing. Procrastination will stand between you and your destination. Position yourself for success. Concentrate on the moves that bring the highest return. If you feel passionate, follow through with your plan. Hard work will pay off. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Stay on target. Don't let your mind wander. Use your imagination to create, not confuse. Unify, coordinate and execute your plans with precision, ingenuity and savvy moves that will outmaneuver any negativity you encounter along the way. Ride the wave. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Choose intellect over brawn. Communication is the path to success. Explain your thoughts and feelings, and you'll captivate your audience. Don't let change boggle your mind or stand between you and what you want. Follow the path that leads to personal happiness. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Two wrongdoings won't make things right. Take a moment to adjust to what others do or say, and compensate to ensure your plans manifest into what you envision. How you handle matters will determine your success. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are dedicated, forceful and intuitive. You are resourceful and persuasive.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		2		7		1		6
				3				
6	5	8		9	4		3	2
		3	8					
4		6				9		7
					2	6		
3	6		7	5		8	2	1
				8				
1		5		2		4		

Difficulty Level ★ 11/29

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

9	8	4	2	5	1	3	7	6
1	7	2	3	8	6	5	4	9
5	3	6	9	7	4	2	1	8
2	9	1	4	6	3	7	8	5
8	6	5	7	9	2	4	3	1
7	4	3	5	1	8	6	9	2
3	1	9	6	4	5	8	2	7
6	2	7	8	3	9	1	5	4
4	5	8	1	2	7	9	6	3

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

HANUKKAH SAMEACH! Solution: 10 letters

B	R	S	H	A	M	A	S	H	A	R	E	H	N	C
L	K	U	T	R	C	A	S	S	O	L	A	M	O	A
E	I	F	Z	J	E	R	U	S	A	L	E	M	I	N
S	N	G	A	T	O	R	A	H	L	N	M	T	T	D
S	D	A	H	I	Z	S	N	E	O	E	A	E	A	E
I	L	N	Y	T	T	O	L	R	M	L	H	S	C	L
N	E	I	A	A	S	H	A	O	E	A	Y	N	I	A
G	S	Y	R	L	E	H	R	Ⓜ	Y	T	M	U	D	B
S	K	O	P	B	P	A	I	Ⓐ	L	K	N	S	E	R
E	C	T	R	D	T	G	I	Ⓙ	I	E	E	A	D	U
V	I	E	F	E	S	T	I	V	A	L	T	G	L	M
I	W	S	L	E	D	I	E	R	D	E	I	G	H	T
V	I	P	F	E	A	S	T	N	O	F	P	M	A	L
O	O	I	L	S	I	O	A	N	T	E	M	P	L	E
N	I	N	E	K	Z	C	U	S	T	O	M	S	S	G

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Blessings, Candelabrum, Candles, Cassola, Commemorate, Customs, Daily, Dedication, Dreidel, Eight, Faith, Feast, Festival, Gelt, Gifts, Gimel, Hallel, Hebrew, Hymn, Jam, Jerusalem, Kindle, Kisev, Lamp, Lantern, Latke, Lights, Ma'oz Tzur, Menorah, Nine, Oils, Plan, Pray, Sevivon, Shamash, Share, Spin, Star, Sufganiyot, Sunset, Temple, Torah, Wicks, Zot

Last Friday's Answer: Energy

Purchase **WONDERWORD** books in time for the holidays! Visit WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

Suns extend winning streak to 16, beating Nets, 113-107

NEW YORK (AP)—Devin Booker scored 30 points, Chris Paul had 22 and the Phoenix Suns extended their winning streak to 16 games with a 113-107 victory over the Brooklyn Nets on Saturday night.

Playing for the second straight night to end a four-game trip, Phoenix never trailed and led by as much as 22 while moving within a victory of matching the longest winning streak in franchise history.

The Suns will try to do that Tuesday night at home against the Golden State Warriors (17-2) in a matchup of the top two teams in the NBA.

Phoenix improved to 17-3, its best record through 20 games since having the same mark in 2004-05. The Western Conference champions haven't lost in a month since Sacramento dropped them to 1-3.

Paul added eight rebounds and five assists, becoming the first player in NBA history to reach 20,000 points, 10,000 assists and 5,000 rebounds.

Mikal Bridges had 13 points and a career-high seven steals for the Suns. They won 17 straight games during the 2006-07 season, and also won 15 in a row earlier that season.

Kevin Durant had 39 points, nine rebounds and seven assists for the Nets. They had their four-game winning streak snapped.

Brooklyn Nets guard James Harden, left, draws a foul against Phoenix Suns forward Mikal Bridges (25) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Saturday, Nov. 27, 2021, in New York. AP

James Harden carved out a sloppy triple-double in the Nets' first game since Thanksgiving, with 14 assists, 13 rebounds and 12 points. But he shot 4 for 15 from the field, missing all six 3-pointers and committed seven turnovers.

Timberwolves 121, 76ers 120, 2OT

In Philadelphia, D'Angelo Russell scored 35 points and had a decisive steal and assist in the final seconds of the second overtime in Minnesota's victory over Joel Embiid and Philadelphia.

Embiid had 42 points and 14 rebounds in his return to the lineup after missing nine games because of COVID-19 protocols. Philadelphia lost seven of those games without the four-time All-Star and has now dropped eight of 10.

Karl-Anthony Towns added 28 points and 10 rebounds for Minnesota, but didn't play in the extra sessions after fouling out. Minnesota has won six of seven.

Knicks 99, Hawks 90

In Atlanta, Alec Burks scored 23 points, Evan Fournier added 20 and New York snapped Atlanta's seven-game winning streak.

Burks, starting with Kemba Walker and Derrick Rose nursing injuries, hit three of his four 3s and scored 15 points in the third quarter.

Trae Young had 33 points for Atlanta. Clint Capela had 16 points and 21 rebounds.

Rockets 146, Hornets 143, OT

In Houston, Christian Wood scored a career-high 33 points and had 16 rebounds to help Houston beat Charlotte.

The Rockets have won two straight after losing 15 in a row.

Charlotte's P.J. Washington forced overtime with a put-back dunk off a missed 3 from LaMelo Ball, tying it at 135 with 4.4 seconds remaining.

Terry Rozier led Charlotte with 31 points.

Heat 107, Bulls 104

In Chicago, Kyle Lowry scored 19 points and Jimmy Butler added 18 to help Miami beat Chicago.

Gabe Vincent made four three-pointers and had 20 off the bench, and Bam Adebayo added nine points, six assists, and seven rebounds.

The Heat won without Tyler Herro. Averaging 22.2 points over the past 10 games, he sat out because of illness.

DeMar DeRozan led the Bulls with 28 points.

Cavaliers 105, Magic 92

In Cleveland, Darius Garland scored a season-high 26 points, rookie Evan Mobley had 13 points in his return from a sprained right elbow and Cleveland beat Orlando.

Mobley missed four games after getting entangled with Boston's Enes Kanter on Nov. 15. He had nine rebounds, three assists and four blocked shots, helping Cleveland end its longest losing streak of the season at five.

Wendell Carter Jr. led Orlando with 19 points and 11 rebounds before being ejected with 2:09 left.

Jazz 127, Pelicans 105

In Salt Lake City, Donovan Mitchell had 21 points, seven rebounds and seven assists to help Utah beat New Orleans.

A night after falling 98-97 to the Pelicans, Utah never trailed after the opening minute and shot 56% percent from the floor overall. The Jazz made a season-high 20 3-pointers, shooting 57% from 3-point range.

Jaxson Hayes had 15 points for the Pelicans.

Wizards 120, Mavericks 114

In Dallas, Bradley Beal scored 26 points, Kyle Kuzma had 10 of his 22 in the fourth quarter and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored the clinching four points in the closing seconds in Washington's victory over Dallas.

Luka Doncic had 33 points and 10 rebounds for the Mavericks.

James fined $15,000 for obscene gesture, warned for language

NEW YORK (AP)—LeBron James was fined $15,000 for an obscene gesture Friday by the NBA, which also warned the Lakers superstar about using profane language.

James made the gesture after making a shot late in Los Angeles' 124-116 overtime victory in Indiana on Wednesday night.

He had missed a loss at New York a night earlier after he was suspended one game for hitting Detroit center Isaiah Stewart in the face and drawing blood last Sunday. He used profanity in his post-game interview after the victory in Indiana when discussing the suspension.

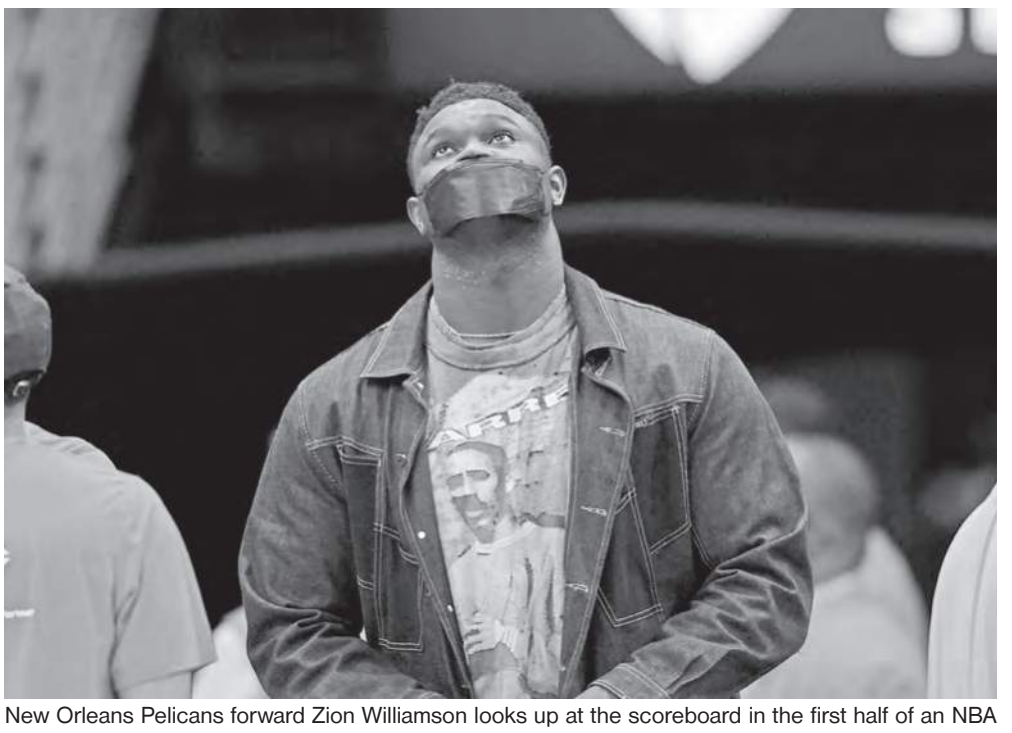
Also Friday, the NBA fined Portland's Robert Covington $15,000 for throwing his facemask at a referee Wednesday. He was given a technical foul and ejected for that action, with 49 seconds left in the second quarter of the Trail Blazers' 125-121 loss at Sacramento.

Pelicans' Williamson cleared for full team work at practice

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Pelicans forward Zion Williamson has been cleared to participate in full team activities, the club announced Friday, but there remains no specific timetable on when the 2019 top overall draft choice out of Duke will play.

"We want him back soon as possible," Pelicans coach Willie Green said Friday night before New Orleans tipped off at Utah. "But it's all predicated on how he feels after workouts."

The upgrade in Williamson's status came after he underwent imaging Wednesday on his right foot, which he fractured during an off-season workout. Dr. Richard Ferkel of Southern California Orthopedic Institute and Dr. Scott Montgomery of Ochsner Health subsequently studied Williamson's scans before he was cleared for expanded work in practice.



New Orleans Pelicans forward Zion Williamson looks up at the scoreboard in the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Washington Wizards in New Orleans, Wednesday, Nov. 24, 2021. AP

"Hopefully, that adds some juice to our team," Green said. "He's a huge part to what we do here."

Williamson participated in four-on-four, full-court work Friday.

He will "continue his progression towards returning to play," a written statement provided by the Pelicans said. "An estimated date to return to game action has not been determined."

The Pelicans lost 16 of their first 20 games without Williamson, an All-Star last season who led New Orleans with 27 points per game. New Orleans' game at Utah on Friday night was the first of three road games in four days.

When the team initially disclosed Williamson's injury at the start of training camp, both Williamson and basketball operations chief David Griffin said the goal was for Williamson to be ready to play in the Oct. 20 regular-season opener.

But that timeline was scrapped as the the preseason wound down and it became apparent that Williamson's rehabilitation would be far more protracted than initially hoped.

Raiders take advantage of penalty, beat Cowboys 36-33 in OT

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Daniel Carlson kicked a 29-yard field goal in overtime after Anthony Brown's fourth pass-interference penalty kept the drive alive, and the Las Vegas Raiders beat the Dallas Cowboys 36-33 on Thursday.

Carlson's fifth field goal came after Brown was called for interference on Zay Jones on third-and-18. All four of Brown's interference penalties came on third-down incompletions.

The Raiders (6-5) ended a three-game losing streak with their first Thanksgiving victory since 1968. It was their fourth appearance on the holiday since then, with the previous two losses coming at the Cowboys.

Carlson put Las Vegas ahead 33-30 with a career-long 56-yarder with 1:52 remaining. Greg Zuerlein, who missed an extra point after the first Dallas TD, answered with a 45-yarder with 19 seconds to go.

Tony Pollard had a 100-yard kickoff return for Dallas in the third quarter, but was stopped inside the 15 to start overtime. The Cowboys went three-and-out starting from their 7, and the Raiders finished off the third victory for the AFC West against the NFC East-leading Cowboys (7-4) in the past four games.

Las Vegas Raiders place kicker Daniel Carlson (2) is congratulated by Jermaine Eluemunor (72), AJ Cole (6) and others after Carlson kicked a game-winning field goal in overtime of an NFL football game against the Dallas Cowboys in Arlington, Texas, Thursday, Nov. 25, 2021. AP

Brown had his back to Jones when Derek Carr threw the pass with Las Vegas at its 43. The penalty put the Raiders at the Dallas 24, and the winning kick came after Dallas was penalized twice for rushing past the line of scrimmage before the snap.

Carr threw for 373 yards, including a 56-yard touchdown strike to DeSean Jackson. Marcus Mariota had a short scoring run on a shotgun keeper.

Dak Prescott had 209 of his 375 yards passing in the fourth quarter. His 32-yard touchdown pass to Dalton Schultz and 2-point conversion toss to the tight end pulled the Cowboys even at 30 with 2:54 remaining after they trailed almost from the start.

Bears 16, Lions 14

In Detroit, Cairo Santos made a 28-yard field goal on the final to lift Chicago past Detroit.

The Bears (4-7) ended a five-game losing streak under embattled coach Matt Nagy, who was answering questions about his job status less than 48 hours before kickoff.

The Lions (0-10-1) made many mistakes, early and late, to extend their skid to 15 games going back to their most recent win nearly a year ago in Chicago.

Andy Dalton, starting in place of injured rookie Justin Fields, led the Bears on an 18-play, 69-yard drive that took the final 8:30 off the clock. Dalton finished 24 of 39 for 317 yards with a go-ahead, 17-yard touchdown pass to Jimmy Graham late in the first half and an interception.

Jared Goff, returning from a one-game absence because of an oblique injury, was 21 of 25 for 171 with two touchdowns. Goff threw a 39-yard touchdown pass to Josh Reynolds on his first drive and a 17-yard pass to T.J. Hockenson late in the third that helped Detroit take a 14-13 lead.

Bills 31, Saints 6

In New Orleans, Josh Allen passed for 260 yards and four touchdowns as Buffalo sent injury-ravaged New Orleans to its fourth straight loss.

Dawson Knox caught two touchdown passes, giving him a franchise-best seven TDs in a single season by a tight end. His second score gave the Bills (7-4) a 24-0 lead.

Stefon Diggs had seven receptions for 74 yards and a touchdown, and running back Matt Breida turned a short pass into a 23-yard score.

The Saints (5-6), playing without dynamic running back Alvin Kamara for a third straight game, were shut out for three quarters. They finally scored on Trevor Siemian's 11-yard pass to Nick Vannett on the first play of the fourth.

Buffalo outgained New Orleans 361-190 and possessed the ball for more than 34 minutes.

Titans rookie Molden sees dad on game film vs. Tom Brady

Titans rookie cornerback Elijah Molden frequently talks to his father, Alex, a first-round pick by New Orleans in the 1996 draft, about football for advice.

When it comes to making a trip to a new stadium on the road like Gillette Stadium in Foxborough on Sunday, that's not the type of scouting information the rookie wants from his father.

"I mean, there's really only a handful of teams where he didn't play," Molden said.

His father played 98 games over seven seasons, the first five in New Orleans, two in San Diego and two games his final season with Detroit. His son did notice his father playing against the Patriots on TV recently.

"I think we were watching, you know, Tom Brady's new documentary, and I saw 25 for the Chargers on that," the rookie cornerback said. "They were getting torched. But yeah, I think that he's played almost everywhere."

Elijah Molden, the 100th pick overall in April out of Washington, has started four of his 11 games this season. He also has a pick-6 in Tennessee's win over Indianapolis.

TAKING RESCUE DOGS HOME

Baltimore Ravens left tackle Ronnie Stanley has played only seven games since his All-Pro season in 2019 due to ankle injuries.

The 2016 first-round draft pick is staying busy while rehabbing. He recently launched the Ronnie Stanley Foundation with a mission to improve the quality of life for rescue dogs and to provide training that cultivates therapeutic properties, and match each rescue with an individual who has faced a challenge in life such as a chronic illness or emotional trauma.

"I have three dogs, all rescues, and pretty much the whole point of the foundation is really to bridge the gap between dogs, and humans and show how beneficial each species can be for each other," Stanley said on the AP Pro Football Podcast.

"I think a lot of people don't truly understand the connection they can have with a dog until they have the dog, and I'm a perfect example. I didn't really know how strong my bond would be with Lola, the first dog I adopted here in Baltimore. But we're inseparable. She gets anxious when I'm not around. She's pretty much tied to my hip.

"So I think for a lot of people, it's just kind of taking that first step and really showing themselves how crazy in love this animal can be with you and how much better they can make your life."

THIRD-STRINGER

The Green Bay Packers will be relying on Yosh Nijman to protect Aaron Rodgers' blind side with 2020 All-Pro left tackle David Bakhtiari still unavailable and Elgton Jenkins out for the rest of the season.

Nijman rarely played before this year but made his first three career starts earlier this season when an ankle injury sidelined Jenkins. As his role has increased, the 2019 undrafted free agent from Virginia Tech has started to reveal his personality.

Rodgers noticed that earlier this season after the Packers scored a touchdown.

"Out of nowhere Yosh comes into the frame and does 'The Robot,' and we'd never seen this personality from Yosh at all," Rodgers said. "I mean Yosh is a great kid, very quiet though, kind of goes about his business, doesn't say a whole lot, lets the other guys in the room be the funny guys. But him doing 'The Robot,' I think everybody was like, 'Oh my gosh, Yosh, that was amazing. We need to see more of that.' "

Nijman says he has enjoyed dancing ever since he was a kid. He even offered some tips after being asked to show off his dance moves at a Thursday media session.

"Every step you take, you've got to freeze frame," Nijman said. "But the most important thing is to not show any facial expression when you're doing 'The Robot.'"

STREAK ENDED

Minnesota Vikings equipment manager Dennis Ryan had to miss the game against Green Bay last Sunday because he tested positive for COVID-19. That happened to be the first time since 1979 that Ryan missed a game, a streak of 705 consecutive games worked, according to a tally by Vikings.com.

"He texted me that we should beat them," coach Mike Zimmer said.

That they did, a 34-31 victory over the rival Packers that was inspiring enough for the head coach to award Ryan one of the three game balls he gave out in his postgame locker room speech—even though Ryan wasn't there to receive the honor in real time.

"Everybody in this building loves Dennis. He's a tireless worker," Zimmer said. "He goes out of his way for everybody." ***(AP)***

Saints honor Brees at halftime of Thanksgiving night game

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Retired Saints quarterback Drew Brees finally got a send-off from a packed and loud Superdome.

With Brees calling Thursday night's game between New Orleans and Buffalo as part of the NBC broadcast team, the franchise chose to honor Brees on the field at halftime.

With the Southern University band spelling out "Brees #9" on the field, a montage of memorable moments from Brees career played on Superdome video boards before Saints owner Gayle Benson introduced Brees. Cheers erupted, quickly followed by elongated howls of, "Dreeew!"

"We've experienced so many unbelievable moments on this field and in this city.," Brees said. "Thank you so much for loving us, thank you for embracing me and my family. We will always love you and we will always work to make you proud."

Brees then raised his fist in the air while urging the crowd to belt out it's traditional chant of "Who dat, who dat, who dat say they gonna beat them Saints!"

"The greatest fans in the world, let's blow the top off this dome and make the world feel it and hear it," Brees said as he brought down his arm, initiating the chant.

The crowd then cheered as Brees walked off the field to go back to work.

Brees, who played 20 NFL season and his last 15 in New Orleans, played his final season before mostly sparse crowds as the NFL operated under COVID-19 protocols significantly restricting the size of gatherings in stadiums.

He retired last offseason as the NFL's all-time leader in yards passing with 80,358, but has since been eclipsed this season by Tampa Bay's Tom Brady.

Brees' 571 career touchdown passes rank second behind Brady's 610.

Brees, who began his career with the then-San Diego Chargers in 2001, came in New Orleans at a time when the city was still coping with widespread devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. In his first season, the Saints—who'd gone 3-13 in 2005—improved to 10-6 and advanced to the franchise's first NFC title game.

That was the first of nine season in which Brees led the Saints to the playoffs, with the team winning one Super Bowl and advancing three times to the NFC championship game.

Tinian caging playoffs resume tonight

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

After more than a month of postponement, the Tinian Amateur Basketball Association will resume its Island-wide Men's Bud Light Basketball League tonight at the Tinian Multi-Purpose Gymnasium.

The single-elimination playoffs were supposed to start last Oct. 27 but was scrapped following a surge of local COVID-19 case on neighboring Saipan.

Tinian Amateur Basketball Association said the Final Four of the Island-wide Men's Bud Light Basketball League will resume tonight at the Tinian Multi-Purpose Gymnasium.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TABA president Christopher SN King, who is coordinating the league, said the semifinals between No. 1 seed Team Kio and No. 4 Team CNMI and No. 2 Devil Dog Warriors vs. No. 3 Rampage will finally push through tonight.

The first game between Team Kio and Team CNMI is set at 6pm, while the second game will feature Team Rampage against Team Marines Devil Dogs at 8pm.

Barring any unforeseen circumstances, the finals between the semifinal winners and the battle for third between the losers will be played on Friday, Dec. 3. It will be followed by trophy presentation. King reminded everyone watching the games to follow COVID-19 protocols.

King thanked the players, coaching staff, and the basketball-loving community on Tinian for their understanding and patience. He also extended his gratitude to officials of TABA, Tinian Amateur Sports Association, and tourney statisticians and referees.

Team Kio finished the double-elimination round with a perfect 14-0 win-loss card. The unbeaten record came as bittersweet as the ongoing season also saw them lose team namesake Kioni Sablan from cancer. Sablan is also the brother of mainstays Dustin, Bing, Paka, and Kim King.

Marines Devil Dogs came in second with an 11-3 record, followed by Rampage at 10-4. Team CNMI caught the last bus to the semifinals after wounding up with 5-9 in the team standings. It actually finished tied with RNV, but edged the former on a tiebreak.

Head-to-head, Team CNMI beat RNV, 76-53, in the first round last Sept. 17. RNV exacted its vengeance last Oct. 20 with a 76-75 nipping of Team CNMI in the second round. The results of both matches gave Team CNMI a plus 12 quotient. Aside from RNV, also missing out on the postseason were FPA Power Builders (4-10), SMA Flyers (4-10), and Navy KO'BEE's (3-11).

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	14	6	.700	–
New York	11	9	.550	3
Boston	10	10	.500	4
Philadelphia	10	10	.500	4
Toronto	9	11	.450	5

Southeast Division

Miami	13	7	.650	–
Washington	13	7	.650	–
Charlotte	13	9	.591	1
Atlanta	11	10	.524	2½
Orlando	4	17	.190	9½

Central Division

Chicago	13	8	.619	–
Milwaukee	12	8	.600	½
Cleveland	10	10	.500	2½
Indiana	9	12	.429	4
Detroit	4	15	.211	8

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	10	8	.556	–
Memphis	9	10	.474	1½
San Antonio	5	13	.278	5
New Orleans	5	17	.227	7
Houston	3	16	.158	7½

Northwest Division

Utah	13	7	.650	–
Portland	10	10	.500	3
Minnesota	10	10	.500	3
Denver	9	10	.474	3½
Oklahoma City	6	13	.316	6½

Pacific Division

Golden State	17	2	.895	–
Phoenix	17	3	.850	½
L.A. Clippers	11	8	.579	6
L.A. Lakers	10	11	.476	8
Sacramento	8	12	.400	9½

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	7	4	0	.636	326	182
New England	7	4	0	.636	300	177
Miami	4	7	0	.364	201	269
N.Y. Jets	2	8	0	.200	178	320

South

Tennessee	8	3	0	.727	291	254
Indianapolis	6	5	0	.545	309	245
Houston	2	8	0	.200	150	271
Jacksonville	2	8	0	.200	159	262

North

Baltimore	7	3	0	.700	247	230
Cincinnati	6	4	0	.600	268	216
Pittsburgh	5	4	1	.550	214	226
Cleveland	6	5	0	.545	244	251

West

Kansas City	7	4	0	.636	281	250
L.A. Chargers	6	4	0	.600	260	265
Las Vegas	6	5	0	.545	259	295
Denver	5	5	0	.500	200	183

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

Dallas	7	4	0	.636	326	250
Philadelphia	5	6	0	.455	297	260
Washington	4	6	0	.400	212	267
N.Y. Giants	3	7	0	.300	189	246

South

Tampa Bay	7	3	0	.700	309	222
Carolina	5	6	0	.455	226	220
New Orleans	5	6	0	.455	257	249
Atlanta	4	6	0	.400	178	288

North

Green Bay	8	3	0	.727	247	214
Minnesota	5	5	0	.500	255	242
Chicago	4	7	0	.364	179	254
Detroit	0	10	1	.045	174	289

West

Arizona	9	2	0	.818	310	202
L.A. Rams	7	3	0	.700	271	227
San Francisco	5	5	0	.500	246	222
Seattle	3	7	0	.300	194	209

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MULDOON

From Page 20

NMA's Christmas Island Relay, where the school is gunning for its seventh straight championship.

Eason also dedicated his win to pastor Kok H. Pang. Last year, Eason was named the top track athlete of NMA after striking gold in the 100m, 200m, and 400m events. He also led Agape to first-place finishes in two relay events.

Coming in second in the women's division was Audrey Christley with a time of 42:50.31, while completing the Top 3 was Gabbi Race who tackled the course in 51:51.

For the men, taking runner-up honors was Michael Deneven who clocked in at 45:49. He was followed by 12-year-old Daniel Yang, also of Agape, who checked in at 50:00.

NMA secretary general Robin Sapong congratulated all the winner and participants as well as the volunteers of this year's virtual Turkey Trot.

"Given the current situation overall we are thankful to host a hybrid version of this year's event. We are looking forward for an in-person event next year. Many thanks to our supporters, runners, and partners for making this year's event a success," he said.

He also gave a special shoutout to the Department of Public Safety for keeping runners of the Turkey Trot safe during this year's staging, which saw Sapong and company man a water station just before the summit of Mount Tapochao last Thursday from 6am to 8am.

"We had a chance to greet the runners on the way up at aid station, but it's not the same feeling being at the finish line."

On a personal note, Sapong said he had an opportunity to take part in this year's race because of its virtual nature.

"Actual positive side of being virtual was I got to run it on the last day," he said.

He also reminded the Top 3 men and women finishers to redeem their frozen turkey prizes from NMA's sponsor, Joeten Enterprises. He said pick up is at Joeten Hafa Adai Shopping Center in Garapan. Please check the supervisor on duty and bring a photo ID.

EZEKIEL

From Page 20

berth at the lower half of the men's open singles draw.

At the top half of the draw, Jordan Pangilinan, who also saw action in the Samoa Pacific Games, advanced to the semis following a similar two-game triumph over Daniel Macario, 21-18, 21-7. Pangilinan's next opponent will be No. 1 seed Joseph Torres, who along with Guerrero got a bye in the first round and automatically moved into the semis. The Pangilinan-Torres battle for the second and last finals ticket is scheduled for this Friday, while the championship match will also take place on the same day.

Before their men's singles collision, Pangilinan and Torres first teamed up last Friday and marched into the finals after easing past Nicomedez Antonio and Paulo Quidato in the men's open doubles play. The No. 1 seed Pangilinan and Torres coasted to a 21-8 win in the first game and then closed out the match with a 21-9 triumph.

The top-seeded players will now have to wait for their foes in the championship game this Saturday, as the finals berth at the lower half of the draw is still up for grabs. Guerrero and Hajin Oh boosted their chances to clinch the other men's doubles finals seat after sweeping Patrick Fieldad and Li, 21-15, 21-9. Oh and Guerrero will next face siblings Daniel and Ezekiel Macario, who gained outright semis slot as they are seeded second in the draw and drew a bye.

Meanwhile, besides the men's open singles and doubles divisions, the inaugural NMI Badminton National Championships also features matches in the women's open doubles and singles and mixed doubles. Results in the women's division will be reported in *Saipan Tribune*'s Tuesday edition. There's also a separate competition for U19 players (boys and girls singles, doubles, and mixed doubles). The U19 division games will kick off this Friday.

The NMI Badminton National Championships is organized by the Northern Marianas Badminton Association and is supported by Badminton Oceania. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NMI through the NMBA, is one of the only few member-countries of Badminton Oceania to have hosted a national championships this year. The Cook Islands had its event early this month, Solomon Islands and New Zealand's took place in April and July, respectively, while Australia will have its open competition next month.

CRUZ

From Page 20

home either a cooked ham set or cooked turkey set.

In the par 3 competition, Varias, Cataluna, and Ganacias took the win.

Cruz, who first fell in love with the sport in 1988, said he didn't really do anything extraordinary during the Turkey Shoot and he just got lucky that the rest of the field had a bad day swinging the club.

The Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija in the Philippines native said he was actually surprised to take the victory in the Thanksgiving tournament.

One of the original founders of the club that was established in 1993 thanked Fil-Taga officials and tourney organizers for holding the competition.

Fil-Taga would also like to thank members Tony Cabrera and Jess Yumul for the additional ham and turkey sets that were used as prizes for the 2021 Turkey Shoot. Fil-Taga's December Ace is set on Dec. 18 at a still undetermined venue.

Suns extend winning streak to 16, beating Nets, 113-107 PAGE 17

Tinian caging playoffs resume tonight PAGE 19

Participants of the 2021 Northern Marianas Athletics Mt. Tapochao Virtual Run pose for a group photo atop Saipan's highest peak Thanksgiving Day last Thursday. EDWARD DELA CRUZ JR.

Muldoon, Tang top virtual Turkey Trot

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Dr. Lily Muldoon and Eason Tang were the fleetest afoot in the 2021 Northern Marianas Athletics Mt. Tapochao Virtual Run held from Thursday, Nov. 25, to Saturday, Nov. 27.

The organizing Northern Marianas Athletics said they didn't want COVID-19 to cancel one of its longest running events, but like last year opted to do it virtually this Thanksgiving weekend.

In the 2021 edition of the event, unofficially called the Turkey Trot, California native Muldoon beat all comers by reaching the 1,555-foot peak in 44:46.

The 36-year-old Commonwealth Health Center physician ran the 6.754-kilometer course from Lower Base to Saipan's highest summit last Thursday, Thanksgiving Day itself.

Tang, an 18-year-old student at Agape Christian School, came first in the men's division after crossing the finish line in 45:47.

He said it was his first time to take part in the Turkey Trot, which he described as a very tough challenge and humbly added he was as surprised as anyone that he came in first among the men.

Eason said he took part in the Turkey Trot as training for Agape's title defense in

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Muldoon

Tang

Ezekiel Macario reaches finals

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Samoa Pacific Games participant Ezekiel Macario pulled off an upset over Nathan Guerrero in the men's open singles play in the NMI Badminton National Championships last Friday at the TSL Sports Complex.

Macario, who represented the NMI in the 2019 Pacific Games in Apia, Samoa, was pitted against fellow national team player Guerrero in the semis and took a 21-17, 21-14 victory to punch the first finals ticket in the division. Macario earlier cruised to a 21-0, 21-0 win over Perry Li to reach the semis and challenge the No. 2 seed Guerrero for the finals

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Ezekiel Macario returns to Nate Guerrero during the second game of their semis duel in the men's open singles play in the NMI Badminton National Championships last Friday at the TSL Sports Complex. ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Cruz no turkey in Fil-Taga Turkey Shoot

By MARK RABAGO
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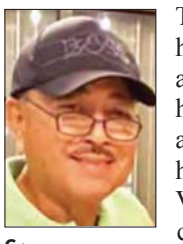
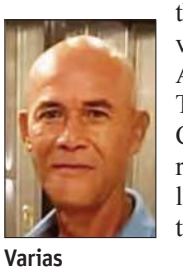
Fil-Taga Golfers Association pioneer Mike Cruz showed everyone how it's done after topping the club's 2021 Turkey Shootout last Nov. 20 at the Kingfisher Golf Links in Talafofo.

The 72-year-old owner of NorthPac Construction shot a net score of 73 to win the $100 cash prize plus the cooked ham set that came along with it.

Coming in second was Ed Varias, who was two shots off Cruz's pace with a net 75 and settled for the $50 runner-up purse, while Freddie Cataluna, last year's winner with a net 68, completed the Top 3 with his net 76 and went home with a cooked ham set. Varias incidentally also won the November Ace of Fil-Taga since Cruz already won last September.



Cruz



Varias

Dan Ganacias (net 76), Bert Suda (net 76), Henry Bautista (net 77), Will Maui (net 77), Ronnie Santos (net 82), and Ruben Avendano (85) also took

See CRUZ on Page 19